

# LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

No. 1317.—August 28, 1869.

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## A LIFE'S LESSON.

Let me record what life has taught me  
 In the lapse of its five and forty years;  
 Evil and good those years have brought me,  
 Sunshine of gladness, rain of tears.  
 Its flowers are faded, its wine is spilled,  
 Alike are vanished and unfulfilled  
 Its noblest hopes and its darkest fears.

I have learnt that life is a hopeless tangle,  
 That we waste our pains if we seek the clue;  
 That words will clash and opinions jangle,  
 Till we reach the kingdom where all is true :  
 That neither preacher nor priest nor friend  
 Can help a soul to its journey's end,  
 Or clear the maze it must struggle thro'.

I have learnt that our wisdom and skill and  
 knowledge  
 Are the efforts of children here below,  
 On the lowest benches of Truth's great college,  
 To guess at what grown-up angels know :  
 As the child of five to the child of four,  
 Is the Sage to the Fool; and our highest lore  
 Is the lore of the babe that begins to grow.

I have learnt that the best and wisest nature  
 Is the childlike, simple, ungifted one,  
 That is content to be God's small creature,  
 And asks no questions of star or sun :  
 That runs the race that is set before it  
 By the common-daylight shining o'er it,  
 And waits for more, till the race is run.

I have learnt that the commonest gifts and  
 graces  
 Are the best and noblest, when all is said;  
 That peace and kindness, on homely faces  
 Are a glow from heaven directly shed;  
 That the Devil, disguised as Angel of Light,  
 Has much to do with the soaring flight  
 Of the restless heart and the seething head.

I have learnt that Genius is partly fever,  
 Raving delusion and morbid dream;  
 That the healthy nature is wise, not clever,  
 Knows the things that are, from the things  
 that seem;  
 Loves and works and has little to say;  
 Will feel next year as it feels to-day;  
 And is slow of thought, as we idly deem.

I have learnt that our wild and weak emotions  
 Are not worth a place in tale or song;  
 That we need not trust our sublime notions,  
 For they are sure not to last us long;  
 That the best we can do is to hold our peace  
 And love our neighbour, and wait release  
 With a helpful hand and a silent tongue.

I have learnt that a friend who is worth the  
 having,  
 Is a friend who will hurt you now and then;  
 Will turn to ice at your sickly craving  
 For sympathy uttered by word and pen;

Will pull you with brave rough hands away  
 From the idols you build to your gods of clay,  
 And break them down, lest you kneel again.

I have learnt that Pleasure is far more pleasant,  
 When it grows from some common and cost-  
 less thing,  
 That is offered alike to prince and peasant,  
 Than from such as our wealth or our toil may  
 bring.  
 That we ought to play with the playthings given  
 For His children's use, by our Lord in Heaven,  
 Which never wear out, nor fail, nor sting.

That the toys we make for our own diversion,  
 Are dangerous things that will cost us dear;  
 We are proud of the taste that is all perversion,  
 Till it turns to loathing, as life grows sere :  
 And then God help us, if we are left  
 Of all our illusions and joys bereft,  
 In a flowerless autumn, cold and drear.

But the happiest lesson my life has taught me,  
 The one that my heart has learnt the best,  
 Thro' all the pain that the years have brought  
 me,  
 Thro' disappointment and sore unrest,  
 Is to love and rejoice in, more and more,  
 The treasures of nature's boundless store,  
 The innocent things which God hath blest.

Ah, how I thank my God for making  
 This joy in His works a part of me,  
 So that my heart in its sorest aching  
 Can be glad in the gladness of bird and bee :  
 Can turn to look at a fern or flower,  
 Soothed in its darkest and saddest hour,  
 When a human touch would be agony.

Oh, faithful Nature! as Life declineth  
 She grows more dear to this soul of mine;  
 A purer light on her sweet face shineth,  
 A Glory deathless, a stamp divine;  
 The trees of earth seem more fair than ever,  
 As I think of the Tree by the Heavenly River,  
 And spirit and sense in the joy combine.

The passionate glow of the sweet spring season  
 Comes warm to my heart as in days of old;  
 Its beauty is dear for a purer reason,  
 And dearer it grows as the years unfold :  
 Mountain and meadow and herb and tree,  
 Are the truest of all true friends to me,  
 And the best of their story is not yet told.

For if Thou, oh Framer of Souls, hast made me  
 Glad thro' Thy works, as indeed Thou hast;  
 If this gladness and hope has ne'er betrayed me  
 But is stronger now than in bright days past :  
 Hast thou not taught me to understand  
 A part of the joy of the Promised Land ?  
 And wilt Thou not lead me there at last ?  
 Dublin University Magazine. MARIA.

From The Quarterly Review.  
EASTERN CHRISTIANS.\*

THE phrase "Eastern Christians" is one frequent in word and writing, but has very often no better defined a meaning than the much-misapplied names of "Turks" and "Arabs." Still the phrase is a symbol; and many who, were they asked what "Eastern Christians" really are, might be very much puzzled to define them with anything like accuracy, have yet a tolerably precise idea of what they themselves mean by the name. Something on Mahometan ground, but antagonistic to Mahometanism and Mahometan traditions, something sympathetic with Europe and the modern West, an element of progress, a germ of civilization, a beam of day-dawn, a promise of better things.

Is it really so? And first, who and what are these Eastern Christians?

In matter of nationality, it is well to begin by laying down, where possible, certain geographical limits. Accordingly, for the subject now in hand, we will, at our first start, exclude India, Persia, Asiatic Russia, China, and their adjacent kingdoms or sub-kingdoms, and we will take for the field of "Eastern Christians" that contained within the bounds of the East Turkish Empire, and Egypt; to this last we may not unsuitably add Abyssinia. "Ask, where's the North? At York 'tis at the Tweed," said Pope. And where's the East? might have no exacter answer. Be our "East" on this occasion limited by Persia; with Russia on the north, the Mediterranean on the west, and on the south whatever African lands new Burtons and Spekes may yet discover. Even after this narrowing, our range will be wide enough.

But wide though it be, still wider and stranger in its specific variety is the great "Eastern Christian" genus included within it. We must, therefore, classify and sub-classify a little for clearness' sake.

The first class may consist of the Euty-chian Monophysite, or anti-Chalcedonian school. Of the special dogmas or ritualistic peculiarities implied by these titles our readers may very possibly be ignorant, at least in part; nor would it much advantage them to learn. Laying aside therefore the

investigation of microscopic diversities in ceremony or belief—a tedious labour, and of no general interest—it will suffice for our purpose to note that the above denominations indicate a class of Christians hating Greeks, Greek Church government, and all that pertains thereto, worse than poison; hating also all Westerns, Catholics or Protestants, very sincerely, but with a less violent form of hatred; hating Mahometans also not a little, yet less than the dissident of their Christian brethren.

Now this class comprises four sub-classes, namely, Copts, Armenians, Abyssinians, and Syrians. Of these, the Copts have their principal *habitat* in Egypt, Upper and Lower, though they may be found not unfrequently in Syria also; the Abyssinians are limited to the country which their name implies; the Armenians own for headquarters the eastern half of Asia Minor, or Anatolia, with the Taurus; they are also to be met with in large communities throughout all the great towns and commercial centres of the regions already indicated; the Syrians are, for the most part, inhabitants of Syria proper, especially north of Damascus. Besides their general hatred of outsiders, Mahometan or non-Mahometan, these four sub-classes have a mutual sub-hatred of each other, varying, however, in intensity and degree.

A second class of 'Eastern Christians' is the Nestorian, or anti-Ephesian sect. Here again we need not prolong the examination of distinctive rites or tenets; it may be enough to say that the more special hatred of these Nestorians is directed against the Greeks; they bear also a fair hatred against Mahometans and Westerns in general. There is no sub-class here; all are alike Nestorians or Chaldeans, though the first appellation is more commonly given to the inhabitants of the Kurdistan mountains, the latter to their co-religionists who dwell lower down in the Tigro-Euphrates valley towards Bagdad. A few Nestorians are also scattered about Syria.

A third and a very important class comprises those belonging to the orthodox, or Greek, or Chalcedonian formula. None are better haters than these; in extent their hatred is correlative with the hatreds of those already enumerated, but in in-

\* From the *Levant*. By R. Arthur Arnold. London, 1868.

tensity it surpasses them. This class is divided into two sub-classes, namely, Phanariot Greeks and Russianized Greeks. Of these, the first are to be met with in good numbers everywhere, throughout Asiatic Turkey; their head-quarters are, however, in the western part of Anatolia, and the islands of the coast. The second, much less numerous, exist chiefly in Eastern Anatolia; sheltered or attracted by the close proximity of the Russian frontier.

The fourth class consist of "Eastern Christians" who, while retaining their special ritualistic peculiarities, profess obedience to the See of Rome; they are sometimes called also "Melchite," or "United." These rejoice in five sub-classes—Greek-Armenian, Syrian, Chaldean, and Coptic, each with the prefix "united," and each corresponding in geographical and other circumstances with their non-united namesakes, for whom they reserve their choicest hate, though with a tolerable superabundance of it for each other; also for Mahometans somewhat; less for Westerns.

The fifth class contains the well-known Maronites of Mount Lebanon, colonies of whom may also be found throughout Syria and Lower Egypt. Roman Catholics in creed, and partly so in rite, they sympathize best of all with the Westerns; for all others their hatreds coincide with those above enumerated.

The sixth class comprises native "Eastern Christians," who have adopted not only the creed and obedience, but also the peculiar rites of Rome. These abound most in the Cyprus, and in what once was Palestine; a few may also be seen wherever a Franciscan convent can support a mendicant following. These last are of no importance, either morally, intellectually, or numerically; the mere Pariahs of their race.

We have thus fourteen distinct species of the "Eastern Christian" genus; each distinct from, and each antagonistic to, the other. This number may suffice us; nor need we extend for the present our researches and our sympathies among certain curious Eastern sects, or nationalities, Christian in their origin, but having since developed into strange forms, hardly compatible with the received type of Christian-

ity, though still widely unlike Mahometanism. Such are the Yezedis of Mesopotamia, the Anseyreech of Northern Syria, and the Sabaeans of extreme Chaldaea. Their condition and tendencies merit investigation, but they lie apart from our actual subject.

Nor, indeed, should we have run through this long catalogue of classes and sub-classes, were the lines of demarkation merely dogmatic or ritualistic. In such case it might have been enough to admit to the title of "Eastern Christians" all natives of the East who accept the Gospel, after one fashion or another, and reject the Koran. But these differences of rite and dogma, seemingly so unimportant, are in reality the surface-lines of deep clefts that centuries cannot obliterate; they are demarcations of descent and nationality, of blood and spirit. Each so-called sect is in fact a little nation by itself, with its own special bearings and tendencies, social and political, not to be regarded in the same light, placed on the same level, or treated with on the same principles as the nearest sect beside it.

Distinct conditions imply distinct relations; the latter are, or ought to be, determined by the former. We should do well, accordingly, before we rush into an embrace of general sympathy with our "Eastern Christian" brethren in a heap, to inspect them closer, class by class; since thus we may learn with whom we have to deal, what we may expect from them, and they from us.

We will begin with those whose name has the widest echo on Western ground, the most talked of, and in some respects the best known of "Eastern Christians"—the Greeks. No name has created greater interest or embodied brighter hopes. Three causes have contributed to this popularity. First, their claim of descent, or at least of kinsmanship of that ancient nation to which we owe so much in civilization, literature and art. Next, their Christianity, supposed to have special points of affinity with our own. And, thirdly, because rightly or wrongly, they are regarded as containing in themselves, more than any other "Eastern Christians," the vitalizing element of progress. In England the first



consideration has, perhaps, served them best; in France the second; in Europe generally the third.

There is little profit in trying to form an estimate of a people's worth by vague generalizations and from a distance. We will try a nearer, and so far as possible, an individual acquaintance; and to do this let us go all together and pay a visit to a Greek dwelling-house, be it at Beyrout, Trebizond, Damascus, or Alexandria. It shall be a house belonging to one of the better, that is the richer, class; for Greek society, in Asiatic Turkey at least, acknowledges no distinction based on superior nobility or origin, rank, or talent; the sole discrimination is the drachma. We mean among the laity; for the clergy form a band apart, and their position is chiefly regulated by hierarchical precedence.

We stand before the house; its style, which presents a certain approximation to the modern French street architecture, the number and symmetrical arrangement of its windows, and a general look of economical neatness, distinguish it at first sight from a Mahometan or even an American dwelling. Lucky for us if this eagerness to mimic European fashions has not induced the master of the house to set up a closed outside door, with a delusive bell, at which we pull and pull in vain for a good quarter of an hour; it being much more easy to organize a European bell than European punctuality in attendance on it.

At last we are within the small bare garden—for whatever uses ancient Greeks may have made of flowers, their now-a-days representatives have little floral taste—and we are met at the dwelling entrance by a slatternly bare-footed maid-of-all-work, who being expected, on inadequate or unpaid wages, to look after everything in the large house, takes her revenge by looking, so much as in her lies, after nothing at all. Spacious in their buildings, costly in their dress, Greeks are miserably parsimonious in what regards servants; their short-sighted selfishness does not comprehend community of interest with others. In this respect they offer a striking contrast to the Turks, with their numerous retainers. A second consequence of Greek economy is the employment of female domestics rather

than male, because cheaper. We inquire after the master of the house, Dimitri Agathopylos be it; the bare-footed Hebe scuttles off to announce us. Possibly the door of the room where Dimitri is seated opens out on the entrance passage, and we may thus allow ourselves the benefit of hearing the announcement. This Thekla does by informing her master that some *σκυλφραγκοι* (lit. "dogs of Europeans") are in waiting on him. No particular disrespect is meant to us by the canine denomination, but the Greeks have no other names for Europeans; that is when mentioning them among themselves. English, French, all who took part in the Greek War of Independence, all who furnished the hitherto unpaid, nor ever to be paid loan, are alike *σκυλια*, ("dogs"). It is only fair, however, to say that Russians are not herein included, possibly because not held, in the East, for Europeans. But the most enthusiastic Philhellene, even Mr. John Skinner himself, are, to their Greek *protégés*, "dogs," along with the rest.

Well, the "dogs," who, however, will to their faces be rather more respectfully titled, are admitted into the parlour, sitting room, or divan. The room and its furnishings have something of an European character, and something of an Eastern, being adroitly managed so as best to miss the comfort of either. Rows of weaklimbed, cushionless chairs, little unmeaning tables, at best only fit for supporting a tray of glasses and Curaçoa, or for card-playing; divans pared down to their narrowest and most inconvenient expression; much cleanliness, however,—for the dust in the out-of-the-way corners is the result, not of wilful unneatness, but of insufficient service;—such is the apartment. On the walls a looking-glass, a portrait (a two-penny-halfpenny one) of King George; another of some defunct Greek patriarch, now elevated to the dignity of saint or martyr; and possibly a third, representing three brigand-heroes who came to violent end in the Greco-Turkish war; these, with a few coloured French prints of fancy female characters, of questionable moral tendency, fill up the spaces on the wall.

Dimitri rises to receive us. Not so the burly, bushy-bearded figure, wrapped up

bundle-wise in dark cloth and fur linings, that, half-crouching, half-reclining, occupies the uppermost corner of the divan. It is an archbishop, one who never fails in his visits of pastoral inquiry to the fat lambs of his flock, and of these the wealthy Dimitri is one. The muffled archiepiscopal head slightly inclines in acknowledgment of our salute. Dimitri himself is a middle-aged man, rather thin, sallow, with brown eyes, brown hair, close-shaven face, and an intelligent and pleasing expression of features. Near him, in brisk conversation, are seated (for why should not our fancy people the room no less than construct it?) two other Greeks, merchants also and natives-born of the place; a third, worse dressed, thin, and hungry-looking, is at a little distance; his clothes and appearance announce him for one come from a distance, in fact he is a volunteer-patriot, or brigand, just returned from a visit to Crete.

We take our places next the master of the house, the other Greeks politely exchanging their seats on the divan for the rickety chairs; the Archbishop, of course, remains immovable. The customary compliments are exchanged; and cigarettes, less expensive than the wasteful Turkish chibouk, or the Persian *margheelah*, are passed round, or perhaps omitted. A little later one of the females of the house, wife it may be or daughter, will appear, a smile of unmeaning generality on her face, and in her hands a silver tray with sweetmeats; of which every one takes an infinitesimal portion. Perhaps another lady, a sister-in-law or the like, comes in at the same time, with the same general smile, the same approach to prettiness, and the same want of grace; but as the ladies only talk modern Greek, of which language our party may be supposed ignorant, their stay is not long. Coffee may or may not be served; it is not "*de rigueur*," as among Turks or Arabs.

Conversation opens; and the first question put by our host, at the whispered suggestion of the Archbishop, is about Crete. Before we have even had time for an answer, the other Greeks present join in the inquiry. They are all Turkish subjects, grown up and fostered life-long under Turkish rule; men on whom difference of race and of religion has never entailed a serious disability or burden; on the contrary, it has exempted them from many a load borne uncomplainingly by their Mahometan fellow-countrymen. However, they do not avow, they proclaim by the very terms of their inquiry, their entire and active sympathy with the Cretans, that is, with rebels

against their own Government; and they go on rapidly (for the agility of the Greek tongue is marvellous) to boldly-expressed hopes for the near arrival of the moment when not only Crete, but the whole Roumelian territory, with Constantinople itself, shall belong to the Greeks. To the accomplishments of which ends they, the Greeks, alone and unaided, are fully equal. So runs the discourse. However, the Europeans in general are much to be blamed for not joining in a general crusade for the destruction of the Turks and the restoration of the Greeks to their capital. Meanwhile, Russian co-operation is spoken of as certain; indeed, the Russian emperor is often entitled, "our Sovereign," or "the Sovereign," *par excellence*; though, after all, even he is not to have Constantinople for the price of his co-operative labours; that belongs clearly to the Greeks alone.

Very childish all this, and much out of harmony with the reality of things, our readers may say. Possibly so; but childish or inharmonious, such is ordinary Greek talk, the current index of the "Eastern Christian" Greek mind; and it is this we are now portraying. Let us return to our seat by Dimitri.

Perhaps we venture on an opinion not wholly favourable to Cretan success, or express some doubt regarding the exactitude of the latest triumphant telegram expedited from the Piræus; or, worse still, hint that some much-lauded feat of Christian heroism — the self-immolation of some defenders of a convent, for example — has mainly, if not wholly, existed in newspaper paragraphs and photographic illustrations. Hereon even politeness is endangered; and our Greeks declaim loudly against the apathy of Europeans, and more especially of the English, who seem one and all to lie under a strict obligation — never fulfilled as yet — of pouring out blood and treasure *ad libitum* in the cause of the Hellenes. The reasons for so doing are sometimes derived from Homer, sometimes from the Gospel. We insinuate that at any rate we English once of a time did, for our part, something very material in the Philhellenic line, but that the subsequent conduct of the Greeks, whether as to policy or payment, has hardly corresponded to the efforts of England, or of Europe in general, on their behalf. On which we are informed that Greece never incurred any debt at all, either of gratitude or anything else, for that they were quite capable of doing without us; but meanwhile that a new loan may possibly be better acknowledged.

Nothing but politics, and still politics.

Vainly we try to lead the talk to commerce, to literature, to science; all such topics drop like lead. Religion, that is acrid, anti-Latin controversy, and the *chronique scandaleuse* of the place, bid fair for better success; but we, on our side, have no predilection for either, and conversation threatens to languish.

But here the Archbishop comes in to aid. Hitherto he has said little, except when roused by the Cretan discussion to some energetic expression of hatred for Turks and Mahometans; or, by the controversial talk, to some phase of not inferior hatred for all non-orthodox and Latins. Now, however, he slides into the special object of his visit. It may be the leasing of a house or shop on Church lands, or perhaps the purchase of some acres for a monastery, or he desires to place out some money at a moderate interest of 48 per cent. Whatever is the tune, the key-note will assuredly be money. Or, perhaps, our host himself (and this is no uncommon circumstance) has in view a fraudulent bankruptcy, to be brought about a few months hence; and accordingly discusses with his Grace the form of a deed by which one half of his real estate may be made over, for a consideration, to the title of St. Spiridion or St. Charilembos; the other half has, by an equally authentic deed, passed already to his wife's grandmother, or the like; and when the bankruptcy comes, and the hungry creditors go in quest of assets, they may find shells in plenty, but no oyster. The other Greeks join cheerfully in; one dilates on some petty local intrigue connected with the Custom-house, or the Revenue; another on the supposititious claims of some pseudo-Greek subjects. In topics like these the Russian Consulate is tolerably sure to be mixed up. And, in fact, while we are yet talking, in comes the Russian dragoman—a Greek too, of course, sallow, pliable, but with more than the ordinary insolence. His talk is much like that of the others, only more openly and avowedly seditious.

The Archbishop rises, and goes to visit the ladies of the house; he has been preceded to their apartments by the handsome, long-haired deacon, his companion; but we will not intrude on interviews of, doubtless, a purely spiritual and devotional character.

For our own part we have paid our visit, and are gone. But, our readers may ask, how does the ordinary well-to-do Greek pass the bulk of his day?

Six or seven hours go to business, transacted partly in his own house, and partly in his store-rooms or office, but more by word

of mouth than by writing. Five hours more on an average are devoted to the "Casino," that paradise of the modern Greek; few of them but visit it for two or more hours at a time, morning and afternoon; here, too, the unmarried Greek passes all his evenings, the married one, some. Here coffee, "rakee," the favourite tippie of the modern Hellene, cards, and sometimes billiards, on a decrepit table of the French pattern, serve as supplements to that one great enjoyment of his life, political talk. Here many an intrigue, many a Philhellenic committee, many a lying telegram, many an incendiary pamphlet, have birth; here too the Greek character comes out in its freest and worst display. Exercise, as exercise or amusement, is little to the taste of the Greek, who, like most, though not all, as we shall see, of his Christian brethren in the East, prefers the use of his tongue to that of any other limb. However, the married Greek, who is generally a kind and even easy-going husband, and always an affectionate and over-indulgent father, gives much besides of his leisure hours to his family, and there he appears to real advantage. The young and unmarried Greek is seldom, if ever, what we should call well-conducted; he is not immoral, because in truth he has no morals whatsoever; and when the time comes for marriage, he quits a career of profligacy as easily and with as little effort or feeling of shock, as when first he entered on it. He has no remorse for the ill-spent past, and no self-laudation for the well-spent present in these matters; on three points alone is he accessible to anything like real feeling—family ties, politics, and money. In a word, he has no subjective conscience; and often, thanks to his clergy, of whom more hereafter, very little objective.

Well or ill conducted, however, married or single, the Greek has no taste for any literature, ancient or modern, beyond that contained in a political newspaper or a pamphlet; these are the limits of his reading; history, poetry, science, art, all lie beyond his range. Of the annals of the very country he lives in—of the religion, customs, studies, and even the laws of his Mahometan neighbours—he is almost wholly or wholly ignorant; some stereotyped tales of Turkish oppression and of apocryphal martyrs, are all that he can impart; and even to these a recent date is commonly assigned. Of the political side of Europe he knows a little; of its other aspects next to nothing. The clergy form no exception in these matters.

In religion, those among ourselves who sympathize with the Greek might be some-

what disagreeably startled, were they aware how little he sympathizes with them. True, he is deeply superstitious and furiously bigoted against all strange creeds, Mahometan, Latin, Arminian, all much alike, perhaps the Latin most of all; but he has no deep belief, none of the intense confidence of the Mahometan in God's providence. Greek levity and gossiping in Church, and during prayers, contrasts strangely with the respectful propriety of Turks and Arabs in their mosques; the religion of the Greek is a party badge; a thing of no great intrinsic value, but for which the professor is ready to fight at call, simply because it is the badge of his party. Such are the mass; the devouter sort, with their mixture of observance and irreverence, have a painful resemblance to fetish-worshipping atheists. Of the unmarried clergy or monks, from whose ranks the higher ecclesiastical dignitaries are as a rule selected, least said is soonest mended. In no respect can one say any good of them. The non-celibatary, or parish priests, though generally boorish and ignorant to the last degree, are, on the whole, hard-working and honest men; a better sort of peasants.

In agriculture and whatever belongs to it—in gardening, planting, and the like—no class of men in the East is so backward, and in fact, so incapable, as the Greeks. They cultivate little and badly. Hence, with the most excellent soil and climate for their vineyards, they have no wine worth mentioning. But for maritime pursuits, from coast-fishing up to deep-sea-navigation, they have a decided turn, though not more than some of the other neighbouring races—the Lazes, for example. In carpentry, though not equal to the Turks, who seem to have a special talent for this craft, they are fair artisans; in stonework they are decidedly superior to any, whether in Syria or Anatolia; perhaps, though here the Copts may dispute the palm, in Egypt. Their chiefest skill, however, their specialty, (if the term may be allowed) is commerce, in the fullest acceptance of the term. No men have a keener, a more intuitive perception of the laws of exchange, of capital, of productiveness, of fluctuation; none a more hearty relish for their detailed application. Yet here again their inherent love of adventure and intrigue, with a certain restlessness, and, above all, a total want of good faith, frequently interfere with the solidity of their business; hence Greek trade (we are speaking of Asiatic Turkey, as our readers will remember) is seldom of durable success. A Greek is always gaining and losing money, unlike the tenacious Ar-

menian, and the real-property-loving Turk. A further reason of Greek reverses lies in their passion for law-suits, and, we regret to add, their want of honesty in these, as in almost everything else. Besides, although singularly parsimonious, niggardly, indeed, in their table and their hospitality, so much so, that the "five olives for six guests" of the Greeks has passed into an Eastern proverb, they are extravagantly fond of everything showy—new houses, gay dresses, expensive furniture, and even, though a Greek is rarely even a tolerable rider, handsome horses; and on these points their expenditure often outgoes the limits of their gains. The same love of show, joined with the superstition which often outlives all that could have once deserved the name of religion, renders them also prone to "outrun the constable" in church building and ecclesiastical decoration of all kinds; in this they show much traditional semi-Byzantine taste and gorgeous skill, and thus justify the assertion that Messrs. Maconochie, Purchas, and their like, would have done much better to borrow their questionable finery, since have it they must, from Eastern than from Western models. Another and more creditable cause for profuse expenditure on the part of the Greeks is education. On this point they are very liberal, founding and maintaining large schools, well provided with masters and teachers; though it must be added that the courses followed by the scholars would in Europe be considered extremely superficial; they consist almost wholly of the study of modern languages, with a faint tincture of classics and ecclesiastical history, but no other, not even that of the country they live in. Science, art, mathematics, and the like, are totally out of the question.

The profession of almost all the wealthier sort of "Eastern Christian" town Greeks is the mercantile; a few, however, hold offices under the Turkish Government in the Custom-house and Revenue Departments. These are not unfrequently confounded by superficial observers with the Turks themselves, and their rapacious venality has thus brought discredit on the latter, and, we must add, not wholly undeservedly, since the bad character of the servant is a reflection on the master. The poorer Greeks, when inhabitants of the interior, are indifferent agriculturists; when on the coast they are more congenially employed in the fishing and coasting trade, often in smuggling. In the towns they become artisans, good or bad. A favourite Greek livelihood also consists in keeping low spirit-shops

and disorderly houses. These last the Greek institutes wherever he goes; and as such establishments are on the one hand alien from Mahometan usages, Turkish, or Arab, and on the other offer welcome asylums to the dregs of Europe which are continually flowing into Turkey, and above all into Egypt, it is not to be wondered at if Europeans of a certain class are apt to proclaim that the Greeks are the sole representatives of civilization and good fellowship in the Turkish empire. In this respect they are certainly so, even to the exclusion of other "Eastern Christians." Another, and, as the East goes, a scarcely more reputable profession, almost monopolized by the "Greeks," is that of the dragoman — a profession which, besides bringing in considerable emoluments, has the further advantage of giving the Greeks, in nine cases out of ten, the first word where European travellers, and but too frequently where European residents, are concerned. And this first word, echoed and re-echoed in books and periodicals, is very often the last word of European opinion on many a matter connected with the past, present, or future of the Ottoman empire.

So much for occupation. But, before concluding, we must give a glance — it shall be no more — at the special feature which draws the sympathy of Western Christians, the Christianity of the Asiatic Greek.

It is a Christianity, the dogma of which is based on the Nicene Creed. This, with a slight and well-known variation, is identical with the formula adopted in the West. Greek dogma extends also to many special articles taught by the Church of Rome, such as Mass, Transubstantiation, the Intercession of Saints, and Purgatory, though the Purgatory of the Greeks is not in all respects similar to the Latin; Confession, and much else of what is called the "Administration of the Sacraments," resembles, on the whole, Roman practice. For image-worship the Greeks have substituted, or perhaps maintained, picture-worship; this last they push to the extremest limits of what, when outside Christianity, is commonly termed idolatry. Thus much for dogma and ceremony. In its moral aspect the Greek religion is a great enfranchisement from all restraint, united with an intense, a more than Byzantine, hatred of Latinism and Latins, summing up all in one great commandment, "Thou shalt deceive thy fellow, and hate every one else." A truly "liberal" Greek is as rarely to be met with in religion as in politics; he is a bigot

in both, sometimes a fanatical — always a selfish one.

In matter of race, these "Greeks" are the mixed descendants of Asiatic tribes converted to Christianity, and amalgamated by ecclesiastical rule in the days of Byzantine supremacy. Syrians, Arabs, Lazes, Galatian, Cappadocian, and others, they have all been for centuries pupils of one school, namely, the Byzantine, and represent its teaching. Their Hellenism is a recent and superficial varnish, a political banneret, and no more. Even now their eyes are not on Greece, not on Athens or Thebes, but on Constantinople.

Their numbers have been variously estimated: a million is sometimes approximately given; perhaps the real cypher may somewhat exceed it. Like all other inhabitants of the Ottoman empire, they have of recent years been on the increase — more so, indeed, than the Mahometan population, decimated as this latter is by the military conscription, from which Christians alone are exempt; less, however, than the Armenians, of whom we shall soon have to speak.

To the Turkish empire, considered as such, the Greeks, always discontented — always seditious in intention, if not in fact — are a great political evil. Nor can their superficial imitation of whatever is most superficial in European manners and customs, French especially, be held for a real step, or even stepping-stone, towards the civilization of the East, whatever that phrase may mean. To the military strength of the country, of course, they contribute nothing; to its financial resources as little as they possibly can. Nor is Turkey much indebted to them for the actual extension of commerce, though to this extension they have, partly in fact, more in show, added their quota, and continue to take part in it.

On the whole, it may well be questioned whether this first section of "Eastern Christians" are entirely worth the sympathy and encouragement bestowed on them by their Western brethren, occasionally at the proximate risk of disorganizing or even disintegrating the empire of which they form a part, however anomalous; perhaps Europe itself.

More numerous, and in all the intrinsic means of strength far superior to the "Greeks," but less fortunate in outside sympathy, and less favoured in particular by the great creator and propounder of the "Eastern Question," Russia, or by Russia's unconscious, purposeless ally, French Foreign Policy, hence also less talked of in



Europe — no real disadvantage after all — are the Armenians. Their head-quarters, as we have already indicated, are at Constantinople; also in a manner throughout Anatolia, especially its easterly half; but they are thickly scattered amid the towns of Syria, nor are they rare in Irak and Egypt.

We will suppose our readers acquainted — if they are not already they may easily render themselves so — with the Armenian history of classic and of Byzantine times; with the annals of Ani and of Sis, with the greater and lesser kingdom, and the fortunes of a state, which having like Poland the triple misfortune of three powerful neighbours, has, like Poland, endured, but with far less resistance, a triple partition. But here the analogy ends. The Turks, unlike the Russians, have never set themselves to the task of stamping out the nationalities they have conquered; and while the Poles are being proselytized into Russians by the knout and the mine, the Armenians, under centuries of Turkish rule, remain unchanged, body, mind, religion, usages, and even institutions. Here comes one before us; whether he be from Erzeroum, Kutahia, or Aleppo matters little. All have the same strong, heavy build; the same thick beetle eyebrows; the same full aquiline nose, springing directly, and without the intervention of any appreciable depression, from under the forehead; the same dark lustreless eye; the same mass of clothes on clothes, all dingy and baggy; the same large brown hand, and written in each curved finger tip, in every line of the capacious palm, the same "It is more blessed to receive than to give." A race more retentive than the Jews themselves of their nationality; more retentive of their money too, and more acquisitive. "Shut up all the Jews and all the Armenians of the world together in one Exchange," old Rothschild is reported to have said, "and within half an hour the total wealth of the former will have passed into the hands of the latter." We believe it.

Armenian energy is devoted, with few exceptions, to three occupations — namely, to agriculture, to day-labour, and to usury. The first two are creditable in their nature; the last less so; but in all three Armenians excel.

And firstly, in agriculture. This has been in all times a staple Armenian pursuit, and is still followed by about two-thirds of the nation. In their hamlet-dwellings, and in the general appurtenances of village life, the Armenians are in most respects less neat, less compact, so to speak, than are

the Turkish or Turkoman peasants around them; but their tillage labour is persevering and good; their hamlet arrangements contain the germs of municipalities; the country population thrives, and, unlike the Greek, has no great tendency of gravitation towards large towns or to the coast. Very amusing it is to pass an evening with these rustics. A cottage is cleared out and assigned to the guest, a one-roomed cottage, of course, with a low earth-divan on either side, and a fireplace at the further end; on, or rather let into the walls, are countless wooden cupboards, carved with some pretension to taste; at the lower end of the dwelling, near the entrance, is an undefined space, where agricultural implements, mostly broken, large earthen pots, and other rustic utensils stand or lie; the inner or raised floor is matted, the divans spread with faded shreds of carpet, the wooden roof is black with smoke. All denotes a comfortable untidiness, or an untidy comfortableness, a sufficiency of everything, dirt included; but fastidiousness is out of place in a traveller. So we take our corner-seat of a fire-side dignity, propped on venerable and slightly decaying cushions, probably of faded red silk; and we may recognize the advantage of Christian over Mahometan lodgings in the absence of the dim burning lamp common to the latter, here advantageously replaced by two huge wooden candlesticks, borrowed from the church hard by for the nonce, and surmounted by large, shapeless, dirty, tallow dips, which require and receive snuffing with the fire-tongs every five minutes. In comes the "*Mukhtar*," or "Elect," the village headman, a burly, grey-headed, venerable clown, in deportment and heavy dignity recalling the typical English beadle; follow four or five other elders of the plough, probably a young clerk too, travel-stained, but in succinct Stamboul dress, now on his way from or to the capital; he knows about fifty words of French, and ten of English, which he parades on all occasions. In come the dark blue robes of the parish priest, a respectable peasant like the rest; soon the whole house is full of those whom age or comparative well-being entitle to take rank among the gapers and stagers. Then they talk; good heavens! how they talk! — Christian loquacity is not precisely proverbial in the East, but it ought to be so — but the talk is no longer, Greek fashion, all politics; news is indeed discussed, but so are also literature, history, religion, and the like; one feels that one is here among the inheritors of something like an ancient civilization and a true history. Remark, too,



that although special and detail complainings are not unfrequent, there is no settled ill-will against the Turkish Government, and comparatively little religious bigotry against Mahometans; some grudge, national in origin, against Greeks; some priestly rivalry with the Latins; and, thanks to the missionary zeal of late years, some dislike of Protestants also, may possibly show itself. The crops, their success and value, the amount of taxation, the conditions of farming, some change in the local government, some projected irrigation or water-mill, such are the favourite topics of talk. European inventions, the telegraph, for instance, the steam-engine, some new machinery, or the like, come not unfrequently under discussion. There is much theoretical ignorance, but considerable native shrewdness also in what is said. Still the Armenian peasant has no pretensions to being anything but a peasant; he would gladly better himself, but on the same line of life, unlike the restless and ambitious Greek; with more wisdom, perhaps.

But in large towns — at Constantinople, Smyrna, and the like — Armenian love of labour takes another character, varied by the circumstances of city life. Every traveller, on arriving at the Gates of the Bosphorus, must have seen and admired the huge, almost Herculean, hammals or porters of Topkhaneh and Galata, the workmen of the docks and arsenals; these are, nine out of ten, Armenians, heavy, muscular, large-calved, large-boned men, come up from the country to earn a livelihood; earn it they will, and keep it too. A European workman, accustomed to recruit his strength on meat, beer, wine, or spirits, might well be at a loss to comprehend abstinence like theirs, coupled with hard, unremitting labour. Bread and onions, washed down with cold water, cheese and milk for occasional luxuries, such is their bill of fare; their night's lodgings is in some broken shed, anywhere, where nothing, or next to nothing, is to pay. In the bitter cold of a Bosphorus winter, or the weary, heavy heat of its summer, all work on, steadily, unremittingly and day by day their earnings are put by, till the slow accumulation of copper "paras" entitles them to an honourable retirement and comparative ease in their own villages.

In the refinements of mechanical work, where taste is required, in carpentry, and in masonry, Armenians seldom excel; they are, however, tolerable tailors and shoemakers, never hardly sailors or fishermen; unlike the amphibious Greek, the Armenian shuns the water: he is of the earth earthy,

more fitted for the inland than the coast. But, whatever be his occupation, he is pretty certain, by diligence, perseverance, and frugality, to attain a tolerable degree of comfort, occasionally of wealth; and capital once in his hands will not remain idle; it will increase and multiply, too often by the means of which we have next to speak.

Thus far our picture, though not exactly brilliant in colours, has been by no means ill-favoured. But the business of which we have now to speak — a business in the East almost exclusively Armenian, and one, unfortunately much less creditable than those hitherto enumerated — is that of money-lending, money-traffic, usury, in short.

Every one knows that by Mahometan law not only usury, but even ordinary money-interest, is severely forbidden. The same prohibition extends to insurance, to several kinds of investment, and, by a necessary consequence, to the whole system of "credit." But the result, like that of most excessive or sumptuary laws, has precisely contradicted the intentions of the law-giver; and the necessity of borrowing, joined with the impossibility of obtaining a loan on equitable, because recognized and legal terms, has produced an entire system, unlawful and usurious in character. Meanwhile religion, law, custom, hold the wealthier Mahometans back from exercising a profession anathematized by their creed, and discreditable in the eyes of society. And thus it has fallen into the hands of Christians, and particularly of the wealthiest among "Eastern Christians," the Armenians, who pursue it much in the same fashion, under the same conditions, and with the same results, as the Jews once did in mediæval Europe.

Illegal interest soon becomes illegal usury, and illegal usury has no limit. The Armenian scale varies from twenty-four to sixty, or even one hundred per cent., sometimes by express contract, sometimes disguised under a fictitious loan; frequently by compound progression. All classes are victims, but the chief sufferers are naturally the poor, and more especially the peasants. No Turkish, no Arab landlord, would ever dream of selling out or evicting a tenant, but an "Eastern Christian" usurer will; and when, as is frequently the case, the usurer, through means that we will shortly explain, can gain to his help the strong arm of government, eviction, with all its results of misery, crime, and violence, for Whiteboys are not peculiar to Ireland, is the result over wide tracts of country. Entire villages have thus been unroofed, and culti-

vated lands left to pasture or to downright desolation. The European traveller, primed with staple ideas about Turkish oppression, the Sultan's horse-hoofs, barbarian rule, and the like, sees the ruin along the wayside, and notes for subsequent publication his observations on the decadence of the Turkish empire, and the fatal results of Ottoman or Mahometan rule—observations which his Greek dragoman will sedulously confirm, and which will perhaps be repeated and believed in Parliament. But could he know the real, the active cause of all this desolation, his visionary Pasha-tyrant would fade away, and transform himself into no other than some wealthy Armenian money-lender, the usurer whose cent. per cent. has taken away the upper garment and the very millstone, not for pledge, but sale. The Turkish Government is indeed not wholly guiltless in the matter, but its guilt is not that of principal, but accomplice; sometimes through omission to punish, sometimes through tacit permission, or even protection, accorded to the Christian usurer; a protection often extorted by the Christianly zealous intervention of some European consulate, to which the Armenian, in his quality of "Eastern Christian," has had recourse; perhaps of some embassy. What, indeed, should the unlucky Pasha, the governor of the ruined province, do in such a case? Does he declare the usurious contract void, does he aid the fleeced against the fleecer, immediately a cry of "No justice to be had for Christians in a Mahometan court of law" is raised by the Christian prosecutor; and thence may well be re-echoed, through consulate and embassy, to the Porte itself, nervously susceptible, and no wonder, to such reclamations; thence, very likely, in due form, to Europe.

Still more fatal is the result when the money-lender, as is not unfrequently the case, unites in himself the two-fold character of usurer that is, and at the same time, "Multezim," or Farmer of the Public Revenue. Not fear alone, but self-interest, then engages the Government in the prosecution of his destructive claims.

This is the black spot on the Armenian character, else the nation has in itself the materials of much good; but these materials must be looked for chiefly among the poorer classes. Indeed we may remark, in a general way, that in the general classification of the different stages of society the reverse generally obtains in the East to what holds good in Europe—for in the latter the larger proportion of vice and crime is decidedly among the lower classes, especially in cities; the richer and higher

are comparatively free from social evils—a fact of which the main solution lies not exclusively in better education and the like, but also in that riches, throughout the greater part of Europe, subject their possessors to that surest safeguard of morality, public opinion, while the poor range comparatively without its pale. But in the East, from opposite causes, the poor are subject to public opinion, the rich are emancipated from it, and have always been so; and hence the Scriptural canon regarding the good effects of poverty, and the corresponding anathemas of the wealthy, is a canon by no means of equal literal correctness in Europe as it is, even in the present day, in Asia.

In religion the Armenians, though dogmatically distinct from, and even opposed to, the Greeks, have yet a close resemblance with the latter on most points of practice, discipline, Church government, and so forth. But the Armenian, with deeper religious feeling, has less bigotry than the Greek, nor is his creed so constantly subservient to political ends.

In matter of education the Armenians stand comparatively well. They erect large schools and maintain them liberally; the teaching, too, is to a certain degree solid, and fairly in harmony with the requirements of the East. Much attention is paid to the old Armenian dialect—the Haikán, so called, to national history and literature; French and English occasionally, but in a superficial manner; Arabic or Persian never. However, few Armenian lads, when once out of school, pursue their studies, except, indeed, it be in some monastery, where theology and Church history find life-long votaries.

The Armenians, our readers may have already conjectured, are not a tasteful people; mentally and artistically, no less than physically, they are a heavy race. Their public architecture is heavy; their churches solid, spacious, and ungraceful—a striking contrast to the elegance of Greco-Byzantine construction, ancient or modern. In one respect only have the Armenians a decided advantage, that is, in their dwelling-houses. While the Greek spoils his architecture by an unwise attempt at French or Italian imitation, the wealthy Armenian builds on and adorns much after the old Turkish fashion—a fashion remarkably well suited to the climate and even to the surrounding scenery. Wide balconies, curiously-carved lattices, deep-shadowing eaves, spacious entrances, gay colours in showy patterns; all these he multiplies, and produces a pile unsymmetrical indeed,

but picturesque without and comfortable within, thanks to broad divans, good carpets, and plenty of cupboards, painted bright red and green, within which lie folded up for the night's use silk coverlets and embroidered pillows galore. The guest's creature comforts will be further ensured by a copious kitchen and a good cook, plenty to eat and drink and all good: of all Easterns the Armenians alone really understand culinary art; in this, indeed, they cede, yet only just cede to Frenchmen. Singular that on this point the heaviest nation of the East and the liveliest of the West should offer so marked a resemblance. Cooking, like charity, covers a multitude of sins, and we have for our part little courage to expose faults hidden beneath such hospitable table-covers as the Armenian. Ill got and well expended, these feasts reverse our own proverb about who sends good meat and who cooks: an Armenian cook is certainly the envoy of the Beneficent Power; the meat has, hardly less certainly, been furnished from a very opposite quarter.

The clergy are, taken on the whole, respectable; to say that they are grasping, can hardly be held a reproach, since this quality they have in common with all their kind of whatever nationality; their morals and their teaching are neither below the average, certainly above those of their Greek brethren. Nor are lay Armenians, taken altogether, so much addicted to looser amusements, gambling and curaçoa drinking, for example, as are the Greeks. Their hospitality is truly Eastern, that is, liberal in deed and manner; not, indeed, equal to that usual among Mahometans, yet in itself not deficient.

It is curious that among all sects of "Eastern Christians" the Armenians alone have furnished to Protestantism any considerable number of proselytes. This may be ascribed partly to their greater zeal for education, leading them more readily than others to avail themselves of the numerous American schools and libraries established by missionary zeal throughout the land, partly to a certain innate seriousness of thought and character. Whether, however, the progress, such as it is, of Protestantism among them be a benefit, may be doubted; much might be said on either side.

The total number of Armenians in Asiatic Turkey has been variously estimated: three millions, including, however, those resident at Constantinople, would be perhaps near the mark.

In conclusion, we may say that among all "Eastern Christians," the Armenians (and

in a measure, as we shall afterwards see, the Copts) are those on whom European sympathy would, if given, be perhaps least thrown away. It is, however, on these precisely that such sympathy is more rarely lavished. Yet, indeed, by what special title even they deserve it, would be hard to discover. What social merits they have they share with the Mahometan population around them, their vices are their own. Nor are they the while subject to any disadvantages, civil or otherwise, nor to any persecution, nor inconvenience even; in fact their exemption from military conscription, their national and recognized tribunals, and their foreign appeal through consuls, ambassadors, and newspapers, render them objects of envy, not compassion. And the like may be said of "Eastern Christians" in general — it applies to all.

But the Maronites; those heroes of Lebanon; those darlings of France; those pets of Rome; that gem of Eastern Christianity; what shall we say of the Maronites?

If we are to believe the Maronite annals as chronicled by themselves, the Maronites were from ancient times a regal nation, come direct, or nearly so, from the Tower of Babel to Mount Lebanon, with a dynasty and kings of their own, ruling over entire Syria, Jerusalem inclusive, and connected by equal alliance with the greatest monarchies of Christendom. During the Crusades their banners — how could it be otherwise? — floated foremost in the Western ranks; and Maronite valour not so much contributed to, as determined the victory of the Cross. But when fortune turned against the Franks, and Bibars-el-Dahir completed the work of ruin which Salah-ed-Deen, alias Saladin, had begun, the Maronites, unconquered though alone, still maintained their mountains and their independence against countless infidel enemies, Arab, Turk, Druse, and what not? Who even now hold the keys and balance, not of Lebanon only, but of all Syria; themselves the sole pledge of Christian and European hope in the East; who have colonized Malta; who, having received the Christian faith from the Founder of Christianity himself, transfigured, whatever evangelists may imply or commentators say, not in Galilee, but on the "exceeding high mountain" of Lebanon, have, with more than Petral or Papal fidelity, kept it intact, inviolate, unaltered, infallible, among schismatics, heretics, and infidels of all sorts, for nigh two thousand years, Abdels of the Church, sole lily among thorns; who in war, trade, arts, literature, and religion, hold the distinct supremacy over all nations and tribes of

the East, aye, and of the West also; unless, indeed, France be allowed an honorary equality. A Maronite Patriarch is second, but just second, to the Pope alone; each Maronite bishop is a saint; each Maronite chief an Achilles; each Maronite scribe a Chrysostom; each Maronite peasant a prodigy of nature's best. And so on, and so on.

Now let us descend to facts.

During the seventh and eighth centuries of our era, frequent bands of Oriental Christians, Syro-Chaldeans especially, and mostly Monophysites, or at least Monothelites — that is, in the judgment of Constantinople and Rome alike, heretics — being driven from the uplands of Euphrates and Mesopotamia partly by the irruption of the Arabs, partly by the orthodox persecution of Byzantine governors, successively took refuge in the almost inaccessible, and, till then, almost uninhabited, heights of Lebanon, and there settled. By degrees these colonists organized themselves into a sort of Ecclesiastico-civil Government, with a self-styled Patriarch of Antioch, a Monophysite of course like the rest, at their head, and a certain number of see-less titular bishops for an administrative Cabinet. Nobility or lay chiefs were none; the total Maronite system acknowledged but three classes — clergy, monks, and peasants. Neglected by the Arab or Memlook governors of the Syrian plain, who had little motive for enterprise among barren rocks and unfurnished huts; in open but safe, because distant, hostility with the Byzantine Government, which, orthodox or non-orthodox, was in neither phrase friendly to Syrian dogmas, they remained tributary, but scarcely subject, to the Mahometan rulers of Damascus, Bagdad, or Aleppo.

But when the Crusaders, entering Syria, first opened a prospect of successful aggression on Mahometans and Byzantines alike, the Maronites — a name by which the mixed refugees of North Lebanon were already called, after their first mountain Patriarch Maron, adjoined themselves to the Franks, and claimed the kinship of common hatred to Mecca and to Constantinople. The better to cement this new-found alliance, they disavowed or dissembled their Monophysite ideas, and announced themselves Roman Catholics. The ignorance of the Latin clergy in whatever regarded the language or subtleties of the East, facilitated a union seasonable to both parties; and the Maronites were embraced not as penitents but brothers. Their effective share, however, in the labours and campaigns of the Crusaders, reduced itself to some slight com-

missariat assistance; so slight that its unimportance eluded the later perquisitions of Mohometan vengeance.

After the expulsion of the Crusaders, their Maoronite allies recontracted themselves within their rocky shell; and for two or three centuries we lose sight of them, till they re-appear the obedient vassals of the Druse house of Ma'an, and of the Mahometan Ameer of Shehab, their warlike neighbors, the former on the south, the latter on the east.

During the period which we have thus summarily reviewed, the frequent recurrence of politico-religious pressure, analogous though not identical with that which first peopled the northerly districts of Lebanon with Syro-Chaldean Christians, filled the central ranges of the same mountain with Druses, the southerly with the Shee'ya' Metewalees, and the hill-lands from Lebanon to Antioch with the enigmatic Anseyreeyes; while the old Arab family of Shehab, the almost credible claimants of kinsmanship with Koreysh and the Prophet, asserted, and sometimes exercised, sovereignty over the valley of Teym, the door and master-key of the Druse mountain. Races differing in origin, and every origin a history; but united by the similarity of the circumstances which clustered them together round a common centre of security. Each was an enemy of the powers that were in Syria for the time being, Sellook or Memlook, Arab or Turk; each, the Shehab alone excepted, was a hereditary enemy to, or an apostate from, the Mahometan creed; each sought, in the fortified refuge of the mountain, to maintain its own usages, laws, and independence. But the Maronites, an unwarlike race, more numerous in monks than in soldiers, and better men with their tongues than with their swords, unequal to isolation, sought a guarantee of their existence in voluntary submission to their next-door neighbours, the high-spirited and closely-organized Druses; and admitted for chiefs the Druse family of Ma'an, who ruled over their Christian vassals, patriarchs and priests, monks and peasants, with a rule, arbitrary it may be but not unkindly, nor unprofitable to the subjects themselves. Meantime the noble family of Shehab, whose high blood disdained the supremacy of Circassian or Turk, strengthened gradually and prospered in the East; till, passing from independence to sovereignty, they brought all Lebanon under their power; and, after fierce struggles with which this narrative has no concern, saw the last heir of Ma'an and his vicegerent the treacherous Yoosuf

of Jobeyl, submit to their ascendant, till Druse and Maronite alike saluted them sole lords of the mountain. But their elevation was their ruin. Influenced, partly by the numerical superiority of their Maronite subjects and partly by the delusive prospect of French support, the Shehab chiefs in a fatal hour deserted the Crescent for the Cross, announced themselves Christians, and cast in their lot with the Maronites. All folly is contagious, but politico-religious folly most so; and the only Druse family of any importance then actually established within the Maronite confines, the Benoo-Lama, did after the Shehab example; and thus it came that the Maronite peasants discovered themselves for the first time with Ameers, that is nobles, counted among themselves. Sheykhs they had indeed numbered before, but "Sheykh" among villagers implies simply a village headman, with no title or claim to nobility except in some dubious French patent, or the mere vaunt of self-assumption. Now, at last, by the recent Maronitism of the Shehab and Benoo-Lama, the Maronites became in fact for a few years sole rulers of Lebanon, from Tera-bolos to Seyda'.

"Set a beggar on horseback, and he will ride—"we all know whither. The first use made by the Maronites of their new-found power was an abuse: it was to harass and oppress their old lords and protectors the Druses. Forgetting that the Shehab, however powerful while Mahometans, had now by the very fact of their becoming Maronites sunk to the ordinary Maronite level, and could thus no longer uphold those amongst whom they reckoned as equals, they set themselves to cut away the only remaining prop of the independence of the mountain, the Druse chieftains. Meantime 1840 inaugurated a new era for Syria: Lebanon was thrown open to European arms and politics, and foreign interference combined with Maronite insolence in bringing about the guerilla war of 1841, the bi-partition of the mountain, and the long series of double-dealing and wrong which at last culminated in the bloody summer of 1860, and the calamities with which our readers are, no doubt, already well acquainted. Since that time, irremediably weakened from within, and subject to the Porte and its Pashas from without, the Maronites have talked much, intrigued much, and done nothing.

The Maronites of our day may best be divided into three classes; namely, the clergy (monks included), the townsmen, and the peasants. Of the so-called Princes or Ameers, the descendants of Shehab and

Lama, the newly-adopted Maronites, we will say nothing. "Non ragionar di lor, ma guarda e passa;" the nobility of their origin may be allowed to cast a veil of decent silence over their present degeneracy. As for the Sheykhs, Khazin, Hobeys, Kerem, or others, they shall be considered under the class of peasants from whom they derive, and amongst whom they find their proper place.

And first, the clergy: that is, the patriarch, the bishops, the parish-priests, and the monks. All these, partly owing to the circumstances under which Maronite nationality first came into existence, partly to the superstitious character of the Syro-Chaldeans themselves, exercise in Lebanon an authority after which an Innocent III. may have aspired, but never attained. Nor do they either serve God or man for nought. On every pleasant hill of Lebanon, in every fruitful valley, the first object that attracts the traveller's notice is for certain an episcopal residence, a snug convent, or a comfortable priest's house; the fattest olive-groves, the most generous vineyards, the choicest tobacco-fields, the good of the land is theirs; and one-fourth of the Maronite territory is, at the most modest computation, the patrimony of the Church. No roof covers better furnished apartments, no vaults hold goodlier stores, than those of His Holiness the Patriarch; whether he descend to his winter residence at Zook, or refresh his wearied sanctity in the summer coolness of his palace at Wadec-Kadeesho. Encircled by troops of attendants, some in the appropriate garb of deacons, some in the more dubious array of pipe-bearers or chibookjees, clad, not metaphorically but literally, in the costliest of purple and fine linen; seated at a table, the copiousness of which may in the East be held for luxury; or haughtily admitting the homage of prescriptive superstition, the Maronite Patriarch is at once a parody and a burlesque of an Italian Pontiff, and a model which each of his hierarchical subordinates—bishop, priest, or deacon—strives in due proportion and with tolerable success to reproduce.

The monks, in habits of black serge and ascetic girdles, parade an edifying modesty; but their profession of poverty is belied by the size and construction of their monasteries, by their well-built and better-filled storerooms, and yet more by the vast extent of their lands. The thin veil of personal disappropriation ill-conceals from the eye of the laity, and perhaps from their own, the insatiate greed of the community; and from the prior of the great Convent of



Koshey'a, down to the aged hermit of Wadee-kadeesho, who extends his venerable hand for a blessing and a "bakhsheesh" to the visitor of his abnegation, the Maronite regular is the most grasping, the most retentive of all his mendicant brethren, West or East.

The first impression of the secular clergy, or parish priests, is at times more favourable. A smattering of studies, Latin, French, and Italian, is a frequent result of connexion with Rome, of visits to Italy and France, also in many cases of education received, or at least of years passed, in the College of the Propaganda. The names of Latin Fathers and of more recent theologians, strange elsewhere in the East, are familiar here; and the garbled history of ecclesiastical authors is rechronicled, and believed, under the roofs of Fetouh and Kesrewan. Hence a Maronite priest not rarely obtains the credit of being learned, while in truth only superficial. To the same education they owe their special hatred against Protestantism and Protestants, a hatred bigoted and violent to a scarcely credible degree. In the same they carefully instruct their flocks; and their efforts are effectually seconded by Lazarists, Jesuits, and Capuchins, thickly disseminated all over the mountain; who delight, moreover, to give a practical turn to this anti-heretical fervour by carefully identifying in common use the names of Protestant and of English. The certain and universal salvation of all Maronites; the possible, but hardly probable, salvation of any other Catholics; and the inevitable, unexceptional damnation of all non-Roman sects, schismatic, heretic, Mahometan, Druse, and so forth, but especially of all Protestants; such is the foremost lesson in this Christian and clerical school. And it is from their clergy that the Maronites, more than any other tribe of the earth, take their habitual direction of thought and action.

Such are the distinctive features of the Maronite clergy; in other respects they share the ordinary praise or blame of average Eastern priesthoods.

These are men who, in '59 and '60, after having by their ceaseless and unscrupulous intrigues brought on the bloody catastrophes of Jezzeen, Hasbeya, Rasbeya, Jableh, Deyr-el-Kamar, Damascus — after having provoked a war in which thousands of their people were slaughtered, some on the field of battle, more in cold-blooded massacre, and other thousands utterly and irretrievably ruined — refused the sacrifice of a piastre from their own full coffers, of an

acre from their own broad lands, to support a cause which they proclaimed the cause of God, or to relieve and sustain the widows and orphans whom they themselves had made. Without a blush the wealthiest clergy of the East saw the misery of their flocks comforted by European, and, in no small measure, by Protestant charity. They snarled at the givers, and greedily swallowed the gift. These are they who then — they had learnt the trade before — paraded their long beards, sanctimonious faces, and flowing robes in Europe; and claimed the alms intended by the easily-gulled charity of the West to feed the orphan, house the homeless, cure the sick and wounded, rebuild villages, schools and churches; and which in reality found their way so far as the pocket of Bishop and Prior that, but no further. These are the men who unite all the pretentious bigotry of Catholic Rome with all the vices and meanness of the Christian East; these are they who give to their tribe and nation its special tone, a tone alike arrogant and cringing, base and vainglorious, fanatical to a degree no Greek ever attained, servile to a depth below the servility of an eunuch or a Persian.

Next follows the lay portion of the Maronite nation; we will begin with the inhabitants of the towns.

As townsfolk Maronites offer in their ways a certain resemblance, not wholly superficial, with Eastern Greeks. Substitute France for Russia, Catholicism for Orthodoxy, and you will find in any Maronite house of Beyrout, Damascus, or Aleppo, much the same style of intrigue, the same restlessness, the same unabashed disloyalty to their own, that is the Turkish Government, that characterize the Greeks of the Levant. But in more essential respects the Maronite differs much from the Greek Rey'ah. Colder in blood, duller in brain, clumsy of hand, timid in heart, he is less dangerous and less interesting. Among all Easterns it is the Maronite who most affects to copy Europeans; but of all Easterns also his copy is the most blurred by ill-taste, or incomplete by niggardiness. In the same fashion a Maronite will often hanker after trade, and will talk much about it; but here again his cowardice interferes, and he seldom rises above the paltriest commercial peddling. Shop-keeping is generally the limit of the wealthier; the poorer sort follow mostly those pursuits which imply least enterprise, and least manly vigour; they are shoe-makers, weavers, tailors, and house-servants. Very rarely does a Maronite find place in a government bureau;



the Christian directors, writers, or accountants in the Syrian Custom-houses or Serey's, are almost invariably Greek or Armenian.

With want of spirit the Maronite unites want of taste; his house, if he be himself the architect, is formless and gloomy; his Church heavy and disfigured by tawdry ornament. When indeed anything that indicates architectural or decorative feeling occurs in a Maronite building, public or private, we may be almost sure that some stranger artist has been called in, probably a Greek. The very dress of a Maronite, though the same in the main with those of other Easterns, is generally duller in colour, heavier in fold, and less graceful in cut.

As might be expected from the patronage so long accorded them by France, a patronage to which most of their calamities, and in particular those of 1860, are in great measure due, the Maronites are eager in the study of the French language, which they can often not only speak, but even read and with considerable fluency. But of French literature they know little, having neither the power nor the desire to appreciate it; indeed the utmost goal of their European studies is the position of Dragoon, or a place in a European counting-house, or an employment under a French master. Rarely do they learn Turkish or English; indeed they have a kind of antipathy to both these languages; nor could it be otherwise considering their fanaticism, and perhaps also the speciality of their European patronage. It is, however, to their credit that, though with less success than some other "Eastern Christians" their neighbours, they carry their studies of Arab grammar and literature to a considerable length, and are occasionally not contemptible masters in this field.

Be it also told to Maronite credit, that, although the standard of truth among them is certainly not our own, and a European who should model his veracity on theirs in word and deed would strongly risk passing for a cheat and a liar, yet seldom do they push falsehood to those lengths of deception, swindling, and treachery, which have made the Levant infamous from Byzantine times to the present. Perhaps it is slow-wittedness, perhaps a modified honesty; we willingly ascribe it to the latter; the more so that, left to themselves, the Maronites are on the whole a good-tempered race, fairly sociable, imitative, and, though not enterprising, laborious. Drink and gambling also are only occasional vices among them; their morality, in the narrower acceptance of the term, was never severe, nor has European contact tended to straighten it.

From the Maronites of the town we turn to the Maronites of the country; and here, as is usual among races whose virtues and vices are the result of circumstance rather than of will, we find not much indeed to admire, but less also to condemn. Still their visitor will be startled by the grossness of their ignorance, for although schools are plenty among Maronite villagers, the bigotry of the masters, mostly priests, has in general narrowed down the teaching to some childish Catechism, badly translated from the Italian or French. Another characteristic of the Maronite peasant is dirt; and, with every natural advantage of situation and climate, the commonest expedients of municipal cleanliness are so strangely neglected, or unknown, that even the pure air of the Syrian mountain-tops seems hardly a security against endemic pestilence.

In the culture of the mulberry-tree and the rearing of silk, in tobacco-growing and in the care of vineyards, Maronite husbandmen are commendable for diligence and skill. Their industry, like that of the up-country Armenians, is of the heavy, persevering kind. Like the Armenians, also, they have little turn for sea-pursuits; and while the entire line of Maronite coast, from St. George's Bay to the river of Terabolos, is indented with countless creeks and shallow inlets, well adapted to the small craft and fishing-boats of Syria, the number of sailors or fishermen supplied from among the Maronites is inconsiderable.

The village chiefs or Sheykhs, Khazin, Hobeysb, and others, are distinguished from the peasants around them by their habits of childish intrigue and pretentious idleness, and are confounded with them by a clownish awkwardness, the common badge of the Maronite mountaineer. This clownishness refines itself in the Maronites of Beyrout and Terabolos into mere heaviness and lack of taste. However, their kinsmen of Damascus and Aleppo have, by long separation from the bulk of the tribe and residence among strangers, acquired somewhat of the courtesy and polish proper to the natives of inner and Mahometan Syria.

The total number of the Maronite nation, or rather clan, is variously estimated from 150,000 to 230,000, or even more. We incline to the higher cypher: itself not a very considerable one, after all. Yet it more than doubles the census of the Druses, by whom the Maronites were long held in subjection and at last, in 1860, utterly discomfited, and that of the less renowned nor over-courageous Metewalees, by whom they are habitually insulted.

Here our reader may pause, and consult his reason or his sympathies.

We have now passed in review the three most numerous or the most talked-of Christian populations of the East: those with whose name Europe is not unfamiliar, and to whom her patronage is most readily extended. Eleven of the fourteen species of "Eastern Christian" yet remain; but the minuter inspection of some of these would be superfluous, and of others uninteresting. Among the former we may number the Catholic or Protestant Armenians, in every respect—niceties of creed excepted—closely resembling their orthodox brethren; the Russianized Greeks, hardly distinguishable from the Phanariot; while the Syrians and Chaldeans, orthodox or Catholic, of Upper Syria and Mesopotamia, are best comprised in a general sketch of the inhabitants of those regions. The insignificance of the Eastern Latins eludes research; and want of sufficient information to reconcile or reject conflicting statements compels us to pass over in silence two remarkable, though somewhat anomalous, offshoots of Eastern Christianity,—the Nestorians of Kurdistan, and the more recently famous Abyssinians. There yet remain, however, two classes—the one a clan, the other a nation—each possessed of high interest, and each deserving a distinct, however cursory, notice. These are the Greek Catholics, or Melchites, of Syria, and the Copts of Egypt.

The former present a phenomenon starting in European eyes, easily explicable from an Eastern point of view. Bearing the name of Greeks they have yet nothing in common either with the Hellenes of Athens or with the Byzantine Greeks of the Levant, except the use of the same ritual and liturgy, and these, too, not in Greek, but translated into excellent Arabic. The history of the Greek Catholics of Syria shall explain for us alike their name and their character. Long before the Christian era several tribes of the Yemen, Arab Arabs—so they style themselves, to indicate the unmixed genuineness of their race—emigrated northwards, and, after many fortunes, settled finally on the confines of Syria, to the east and south of Damascus. Their colony was again and again recruited, now from their Yemen brethren, now from the tribes of Nejed and Hejaz; but the superior dignity and number of Benoo-Ghassan gave them a common name as well as government; and with Jefnah, the son of 'Amr, began the series of Ghassanite kings, who reigned for more than four hundred years, till the rising sun of Mahomet eclipsed all

the stars in the Arab sky. But few tribes have shone with brighter lustre in pre-Mahometan peace or war than Benoo-Ghassan; few have attained equal celebrity in prose or verse. Valour, generosity, eloquence—whatever forms the staple of Arab worth—all is ascribed to them, and the silence of their rivals admits the praise of their eulogists.

In common with their king, El-Harith, the Benoo-Ghassan embraced Christianity towards the end of the fourth century, and, like most converts, adopted the ceremonial of their first apostles, namely, the Byzantine. Hence they derived, as Christians, the surname of Greeks, and hence for many centuries the use of the Greek language in their churches, or in the tents, of which, as their annals and some relics of portable sanctuaries yet show, these half-nomades made use for the rites of worship. But that language, confined within strictly Church limits, remained always alien from the every-day life of Benoo-Ghassan; and their off-lying position, situated on the extreme verge of Byzantine rule, allowed but a feeble union, political or ecclesiastical, with Constantinople.

When the Mahometan armies, led by Khalid-ebn-Waleed and his brother generals overran Syria, the greater number of the Ghassan Arabs adopted the congenial faith which fused them with their conquerors; some, however, availed themselves of the tolerance of 'Omar and the Ommei'ah Khalifs, and remained Christians. From their Mahometan neighbours they had nothing to fear; and their retired position beyond the passes of the Leja sheltered them alike from the dangerous sympathies or rivalries of their Western brethren, and from the blood-stained vicissitudes of Turkoman or Tartar conquest. Thus guarded, their history presents an enviable blank, till in the seventeenth century the comparative centralization of the Turkish empire brought the Greek-Arabs of Hawran into a contact too intimate to be friendly with the encroaching Phanariotes of Constantinople; while at the same time European and especially French influence began once more to penetrate into the long-closed East. The Christian Arabs of Iturea and Trachonitis had, in their own and almost in English phrase, no "back" to lean on; and the desire of finding one to prop them up against their over-bearing co-religionists on the one side, and against the possible or existing hostilities of their non-Christian landmen on the other, induced the Benoo-Ghassan Greeks to change the name of orthodox for Catholic; a name occasionally,

by a somewhat factitious reminiscence of ancient partizanship, commuted with that of Melchite. By this change of title they separated themselves from the orthodox or Byzantine Greeks of Syria, and obtained two things, — a hierarchy of their own, and the permissive substitution of the Arabic for the Greek language in their church service. And thus they have remained a clan apart, readily distinguishable by the features of race much more than by those of dogma from the orthodox Greeks of the province; still more alien from the Syro-Chaldean Maronite, also with much less Europe-ward sympathy and imitation.

Divided from their Arab brethren of town or tent by the profession of Christianity, they have, in almost every other respect, retained the distinctive characteristics of pure Arab descent. Their courage has been proved in many a well-fought fray with the wild tribes of the Desert and with the warrior Druses of the adjoining Leja and the anti-Lebanon; their endurance has, within the last century, adorned the chronicles of Aleppo with a respectable list of martyrs who have preferred death to Phariote subjection. In generosity and hospitality they surpass — we can ourselves witness to it — not only all other "Eastern Christians," but even many non-Arab Mahometan populations. In the national ornaments of eloquence and poetry they still, as of old, outshine every competitor. The Arabic language is spoken in an almost primitive purity even by the lowest and most uneducated classes amongst them, while it is cultivated in all its lexicographical and grammatical refinements by the higher; and the Greek-Catholic author, Elias Yazjee, has in our own time ventured to imitate and almost rival the exquisite "Makamat" of the justly-celebrated Hareecree. But the talent of the Melchite-Arab is principally shown in a capacity for the management of affairs, which has peopled the palaces and residences of the governors and chief men of Syria with Greek-Catholic counsellors, treasurers, accountants, writers, till the number of posts of trust filled by them throughout these regions amazes by its disproportion with the scanty census of their clan. This heritage, unimpaired by time, by religious change, or by foreign influence, they have received and kept from their ancestors of the Yemen. But they share, with most other Arabs, an ineradicable, because an inbred, aversion to Ottoman rule; and when Ibraheem Pasha, acting as lieutenant for his still more talented father Mehemet-Alee, appeared in Syria to dismember that province from

the Turkish empire and unite it, so hope proclaimed, to a new and Arab kingdom, nowhere did the Egyptian find a readier welcome and a more cordial and effectual assistance to his projects than among the Melchite-Arabs of the land.

One fatal heritage, however, it must be allowed, the Greek Catholics have, along with their better heir-loom, derived from their ancestors of the desert — the spirit of divided counsels. The same impatient individualism, the same inaptness for unity or even co-ordination, which once, and only once, in Arab history yielded to the colossal genius of Mahomet, but which so soon after his death re-appeared to break up his great national work into countless fragments, never again to unite; this spirit still exists unabated, and repeats itself in every tribe, in every clan; nor has the brotherhood of Christianity, nor the fellowship of belief and rite availed the Catholic-Greeks of Ituræa and Trachonitis, of Hawran and the Balkaâ from its fatal influence. "See how these Christians hate one another," may be a true, though a most discreditable satire elsewhere; it is nowhere truer than among the Melchite-Arabs, nowhere more fatal in its consequences. At war more or less open with all around them, children of Ishmael, their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them, they are not the less at ceaseless conflict among themselves, always at variance, always disunited; till not so much as a single village acknowledges one head, one purpose, or one action. No sooner has an individual of their number attained by energy or talent some superior position, than envy — the curse of the Arab race — raises up ten others to pull him down, and, after having done that, to quarrel among themselves for the very honours of which they have despoiled their tribesman, for no other reason than that he was worthy of them. Blood is perhaps shed; and then the feud is irreconcilable to the tenth generation. The quarrels of Beyt Abou-Khatir and Beyt Ma'aloof, the rivalry of the Harat-Raseeyeh and the Harat-et-Tahta, did more than even the arms of the Druse Khottar and the cowardice or treason of Yoosuf Kerem for the ruin of Melchite Zahleh: nor could all the losses of 1860, in which fatal year none suffered more, because none fought more, than the Greek Catholics, persuade the Damascene survivors of the family of Hon-eyneh to lay aside their hereditary enmity with the survivors of the family of Foreyji, and to remember at least the brotherhood of misfortune, since they had forgotten that of race and faith.

Blame and praise, yet more, perhaps, the latter than the former, are merited by another noted quality of the genuine Arab mind faithfully reproduced in the Melchites of Central and Eastern Syria, namely, an immense personal pride; a pride based on self-consciousness, and hence unaugmented by prosperity, undiminished in adversity; a pride independent of circumstance of sect, of condition, and even of age. As 'Abd-Allah, the son of the heroic Zobeir, and a child then of some ten years old, was playing with his young companions in one of the streets of Medeenah, the Khalif Ma'awayah passed by on horseback with numerous attendants. "Stand out of the way of the Commander of the Faithful," said some one of the riders to the boy. "Neither are you my father that I should stand up to you for respect's sake, nor is the road so narrow that I should stand up to you for room's sake," answered the child. Similar in character, but more dignified, was the reply of 'Omar, second of the Khalifs. Feeling thirsty during a conversation prolonged till late into the night with 'Amroo, the conqueror of Egypt, 'Omar rose from his seat, and, treading on tiptoe, lest he should disturb the slumber of an attendant, who, tired of watching, had, like the Lucius of Shakespeare, fallen asleep on the floor, crossed the room, quenched his thirst from a pitcher of water, and returned softly to his place. "Commander of the Faithful, you might as well have awakened the servant and let him bring it to you," remarked 'Amroo. "I got up, and I was 'Omar; I returned, and I am 'Omar," answered the Khalif.

This is the pride which, among Mohometan Arabs is enhanced, while veiled, by the modest title of the "servant of God;" an affirmation which implies and almost expresses the negation of any other service or inferiority. Among the Pagans or Christians of the race it dispenses with even this disguise. But the defiant vaunts of a pre-Mohometan Ta'abbet-Shurra, the self-laudatory lyrics of a sceptical Abou-l-'Ola or Mutenebee, the devout exultations of innumerable religious or ascetic poets, from the great Gheelancee down to 'Abd-el-Ghancee En-Nablosee, and the vigorous, though imitative war-notes of Nikola-el-Khooree, Greek-Catholic priest of Aleppo, however they may vary in the form and wording of the phrase, are truly one in meaning, and that meaning is unconquerably self-reliance. Christian humility may condemn, as Mahometan humility has frequently done, the vice of pride; but a philosophical mind will hardly be severe in its

censure of what is the root of much real greatness, of noble exertion, of dignity in misfortune, and of moderation in success. The Melchite-Arab is often hated, but can rarely be despised: his independent spirit, if it conciliate him few friends, merits him yet an esteem impossible to bestow on the borrowed vanity of the Greek, the boastful meanness of the Maronite, and the tame servility of most other "Eastern Christians."

The small number of the Melchite-Greeks — they scarce come up to fifty thousand souls — is about equally divided between the inhabitants of the towns Damascus, Zahleh, Aleppo, Beyrout, Seyda, and the rest, and the inhabitants of the open plains, of the Bekaa, Hawran, and the lands beyond the Jordan. We have already sketched the character of the town's-people; whoever visits them will be further struck by the good taste of their domestic and ecclesiastical architecture, in which the true genius of the Arab or Saracenic style is still conspicuous in graceful carvings, airy porticoes, bold arches, and slender columns, and by the easy good manners of his Melchite host, who prides himself on courtesy and hospitality to his guests, after the old Arab fashion. A Greek-Catholic house at Damascus recalls the "Thousand and One Nights," both in the decorations of the building and in the refined politeness of its inhabitants. But the Damascene proverb, "Like a rose, smell it from a distance, and ware thorns," is too often exemplified in prolonged intercourse; quarrels are of frequent occurrence, and hard to appease: and even a casual acquaintance, however amiably welcomed, will do prudently to avoid in his conversation whatever may wound a proud and susceptible race. But in literature, history, local government poetry, and the like, the visitor, if qualified to enter on such topics, will find before him, in Arab phrase, a wide and fertile meadow.

The Melchite peasants are, at first sight, scarcely distinguishable from the Mahometan Arabs around them, whether in dress, habitation, or manner. The same broad cloak, dark, striped, or gaily embroidered — the same yellow and red handkerchief, bound with the same twist of camel's hair round the head — the same old-fashioned arms, sword, lance, or pistol — the same beard, the same idiom and language — the very churches are in their simplicity hardly dissimilar from village mosques. Nor only the Mahometan Arab peasant, but even the half Bedouin, the "Arab-Deerah," or Bedouin of the frontier, is often reproduced among the Melchites of Hawran and the

Balkaa. Besides, the bonds of union between Christian and Mahometan are in these districts tightened by the doubtful neighbourhood of Druses, and the visits, more frequent than welcome, of the plundering Roo'ala and Woold-'Alee tribes. Whoever is not afraid of roughing it a little may pass some weeks with pleasure, nor without profit, in the study of Arab manners and eloquence among the Greek Catholics of Trachonitis; he will learn more there and better in a week than Beyrout, or even Aleppo, could teach him in a year.

The Melchite clergy, like that of all "Eastern Christians," whatever their sect, have considerable influence; yet they do not constitute a ruling class, as among the Maronites, or a cast apart, as among the Armenians and orthodox Greeks. They are often men of much public spirit, active and well furnished with the current accomplishments of the East. Like all Eastern priesthoods, they are divided into two sorts — the married secular clergy and the unmarried monks, from amongst whom bishops and patriarchs are selected. These monks, in particular, are much superior to the ordinary run of their fellow ascetics in the East, and the printing-press of the monastery of Shwoey'r — a press unrivalled throughout Syria in beauty of type and accuracy of labour — may almost atone for the ambitious revolt of its celibate workmen against the lawful authority of the Prior of Damascus. We should however not forget to add that similar praise is due, and for similar reasons, to the Catholic-Armenian monks, whether in Europe or Asia.

We have dwelt somewhat at length on the description of one of the smallest sections of Eastern Christianity, because that section alone, among all others, offers the agreeable spectacle of a race neither servile nor degenerate. Yet the want of servility implies the want of patrons, and the Melchite-Greeks of Syria neither possess the sympathy of Europe, nor, indeed, much desire its questionable advantage. European sympathy in the East too generally implies, for those who seek or enjoy it, a mendicant spirit, a dependent tone, an aimless dissatisfaction, a new element of intrigue, a loss of what one has for an unprofitable striving after what one has not. Further, it implies the hatred of the surrounding Mahometan populations and of the Ottoman Government itself, which, naturally enough, sees with disgust that its subjects have their faces habitually turned to the worship of another star than its own. Hence it may occasionally, and in the progress of events,

imply violence and even massacre. Did not the Mahometans in general, and the Turks more especially, believe, nor without reason, that the Eastern Christian population is the chosen field of European intrigue, the door always open for European interference; — did they, and could they, look on the Christians simply as subjects of the Empire, differing from themselves in form of belief only, united and loyal in all besides; — the Christians of the East would not be left in peace merely, but would take rank among the most favoured subjects of the Porte, from Constantinople to Bagdad. History testifies to their honourable security in the days of the Khalifs; and we have ourselves witnessed their promotion under the brief administration of Ibraheem Pasha. But now, and as a general rule, none are so ill looked on, and with but too much reason. The hatred, first originated by the Crusades, has been continued and aggravated by diplomatic protections and armed interference: and while we condemn the ferocity or fanaticism which presided at the risings of Aleppo and Nabloos — at the massacres of Jeddah and Damascus — we cannot wonder; rather, all things considered, might we think that the Mahometans, with Clive, have reason "to be astonished at their own moderation." Various attempts to extend a miserable and undue influence — fallacious but incendiary hopes — promises even of support from the West or the North — encouragement to ready insolence, and irksome interference with the normal course of local government — all these have worked, and still work, till the Mahometan population and the Porte alike lose their long-provoked patience, and the debt of years is paid off in a day of blood and fire. Thus it is that remonstrances against imaginary oppressions and complaints of wrongs which do not exist, end in giving reality to the very subjects of complaint and remonstrance; and intriguing ambition has more than once veiled with open horror and secret satisfaction the realization of evils to justify the protest which had preceded and caused them when as yet they were not. "Save us from our friends," would be the most rational prayer, did they but know it, of Eastern Christians; and in keeping aloof from European favour and influence the Melchite-Arabs of Syria do but show their wisdom.

There is yet another race of Eastern Christians, more ancient in their Christianity than Syrians, Maronites, and Armenians — of more undoubted descent than the Greeks of the Islands and Anatolia — a race that dates its nationality from no special



creed or ritual, older than the Hebrew itself—old as the first rational records of the inhabited world, the Copts of Egypt.

By what fate a nation, born, it would seem, to command—the skilful organizers of a mighty and long-enduring kingdom—the claimants of eternity in the imperishable monuments of their greatness—the builders of Thebes and the Pyramids—the heirs of Rameses and Pharaoh—have for more than two thousand years remained the scarce impatient slaves, now of Persia, now of Greece, Rome, and Byzantium, then of Arab or Memlook princes, of Tartars and Turks, till they have sunk to their present deep degradation, were hard to say. The extinction of national energy is often a harder problem to solve than its origin and development. Yet even now, after so long a servitude and depression, they still retain, and this may increase our wonder, many of those very qualities which once rendered them lords, not of their own Egypt and Nile only, but of Syria, and of no inconsiderable portion of Asia also; crushed, but scarcely changed.

Since, however, the Arab conquest in 638, the blood of the now Mahometan inhabitants of the Nile valley has so mingled with that of their Arab invaders, besides what further modification it may have admitted from Negro and Nubian, Circassian and Turk, that we will in these pages restrict the nationality as the name of Copt to the native Christians of the land, who have along with their peculiar form of belief retained also the purity of their national descent without any appreciable admixture.

Except a few thousands, five, at most, of so-called Catholic Copts, who to all practical intents and purposes resemble the rest of the nation, the Copts of Egypt belong, by tradition if not by knowledge, to the Eutyehian or ultra-Monophysite school; a circumstance which, combined with the hereditary remembrance of historical injuries, divides the Egyptian from the Greek by a deep cleft of national and religious hatred. Towards the Mahometan population around the Copts have little ill-will, though of all "Eastern Christians" they have had the most cause to complain. The transient atrocities of the mad Khalif Hakim can, indeed, be scarcely laid to the charge of Islam, from which Hakim himself was notoriously an apostate; but there is no doubt that in following and purely Mahometan times oppression, and even persecution, have at frequent intervals weighed heavily on the Copts. The dangerous proximity of their Western co-religionists, the intrusive sanctity of Louis IX., and the Cru-

sades, which involved the loss of other and better lives than those of the Crusaders themselves, may explain the anti-Christian bitterness of the rulers of Egypt; and the knowledge of the mediate cause may have rendered the Copts less hostile than might have been else expected to their immediate oppressors. Besides, they are a patient people.

In all times and under every dynasty the Copts have been the scribes and accountants of Egypt; a position productive of much influence to those who hold it, and also not a little wealth. Their natural turn for calculation, however intricate—their habits of enduring and accurate labour—their sedentary and somewhat phlegmatic disposition—all agree to fit them for this kind of work, and to render them pre-eminent in it. The inventors of papyrus-rolls and hieroglyphics are still the best book-keepers of the East; and the calculating and mechanical skill of old days, to which the hydraulic system, no less than the architectural monuments of the land, bear witness, is yet theirs, though employed at the bidding and for the behests of strangers. Instances are not wanting—how should they be in a land where law is arbitrary, and where public opinion has no general expression?—of Coptic accountants who have scandalously abused the confidence placed in them to their own personal advantage; but, on the whole, opportunity makes fewer thieves among the Copts than might have been reasonably anticipated; and, under its present *régime* of mercantile swindlers and foreign adventurers, the Egyptian Government may have room to regret the traditions of former times, and the diligent service and average fidelity of the Copts.

Commerce, that, at least, which involves distant venture, and speculation in general, has no special attraction for this race. Whatever wealth they may have, much or little, is not to be looked for among the investments of a Suez Canal or of a Government loan. That wealth, if not placed in local and immediate trade, in a corn-store or a warehouse, is by preference converted, where possible, into buildings and land. The Copt is fond of building; and when he can keep clear of the wretched pseudo-French taste which has disfigured Egypt with huge uncomfortable card-paper edifices, and palaces or pavilions more suited, if even that, to the banks of the Seine than of the Nile, his style of architecture is not only, like that of his ancestors, solid and enduring, but handsome, and appropriate to the climate and scenery. Skilful and delicate stone-carving, patterns intricate,



yet in harmony with the main lines of the building, nicely balanced vaultings and galleries, graceful pillars, wonderful latticework, and bright colours so used as best to carry out the general effect, such is the genuine Egyptian architecture of our times, where applied to lesser or domestic edifices. But in larger constructions, and especially in some recently-built churches, the solidity and polish of the granite columns, and the bold grandiosity, almost grandeur, of the general outlines, heavier than the Saracenic, yet not so heavy as the older Byzantine, vindicate the descendants of the Luxor and Esneh architects from the imputation of degeneracy.

We enter the house of Markos or Georgios; we are received in roomy apartments, well-carpeted, and adorned with candlesticks or mirror-frames of massive silver, and furniture curious in carving and inlay. From the windows we look out under far-projecting eaves, into the dense shade of green gardens, where the waters of the Nile, infiltrated through the earth, and drawn up by the creaking water-wheel, or No'oorah, run divided and subdivided into a thousand channels, under the broad leafage of bananas, magnolias, and a hundred other trees gay in flower and copious in fruit, or between luxuriant sugar-cane and the famed pot-herbs of Egypt, the regret and envy of Palestine; within, gaily dressed servants, mostly negroes, bring in jewelled coffee or sherbet cups on huge silver trays; the amber mouth-pieces of the long pipes are ringed with diamonds; and when the lady of the house appears, her massive gold ornaments, the pearls and diamonds on her head-dress, her ponderous bracelets and anklets, all gold, compel the exclamation ascribed, truly or not, to the great Prussian General on his view of London from the top of St. Paul's: "My —, what a plunder." Though, by the way, the word "plunder" in German has often the simple meaning of a multitude of good things, quite apart from the idea of their forcible appropriation; and Blucher, who was better at tactics than at vocabularies, may very possibly have only used the English word in its German sense, by a too literal translation of his thought. So be it far from us also to regard with violent covetousness the festive treasures of our Coptic hostess. Let us, now that coffee and sherbets are disposed of, enter into conversation with the master of the house. We find that he takes little interest in European news and politics; the very names of Gladstone and Disraeli are possibly unknown to him, and those of Alexander II. or Napoleon III. excite no

sympathy: in a word, he has small science of the West, and even less disposition to share or follow its movements. But if our own reciprocal ignorance permits us to enter on such topics, we shall find him well instructed in the history of his own country; well read, too, in Arab and Mahometan literature; shrewd and far-sighted in his views of what may best befit Egypt and her government, her agriculture, irrigation, trade, and so forth; we shall find in him, too, a kindly and tolerant disposition, an easy-going view of life, a keen relish for its pleasures, and a singular love of music, dance, and song. His tastes, though more refined, are not in kind unlike those of his dusky and perhaps elder brother the negro. In fact, some ethnologists go about to prove the Copts of Caucasian, Arian, or Turanian descent; they quote analogies, real or imagined, of language; measure the length and breadth of skulls; and discover conformities of jawbone or forehead. All this may be; but this much is certain, that a Copt is to all intents and purposes, in thought, ways, manners, and even, so far as we can learn from history, in his mode of government, when he had one, and fashion of religion, a whiter and more intelligent negro; not, indeed, after the type of the western coast, but that of Darfoor, Kordofan, Sennar, and the East inland districts. The very skull of the Darfooree and that of the Copt, have the same well-arched, rounded form; and it is possible that the Copts, no less than the great bulk of the Arab nation, are not of Asian but African origin. Still, African or Asian, the Copt is always a son of Cleopatra, and a brother of the too fascinating Pleiads of our own day, the seven songstresses of Kena; and on near acquaintance, we shall be shocked or gratified to find that Christianity, whatever inner and invisible effects it may, doubtless, have on his spiritual being, has left the physical and moral man remarkably unchanged. We see a book lying on a corner of his divan—he was reading it when we came in—we take it up; it is not a political pamphlet, as, a hundred to one, it would have been under a Greek roof; nor is it a French or English vocabulary, the probable subject of Armenian study; nor is it a devotional translation of Liguori, or the "Sacre Cœur," the frequent ornament of a Maronite cushion; no, it is an odd volume of the "Thousand and One Nights," or the mirthful tales of the Rowdet-el-Abrar, or the chronicles of Makreezee, or a collection of Arab love-poems. The paper lying by is no Gazette, it is a series of accounts that might puzzle Bidder; or,

perhaps, it is a copy of some choice passage from Hareeree. Did we find the Koran itself in company we need hardly be surprised.

Yet the Copt is a devout, indeed a superstitious Christian; only his Christianity, however intense in belief and copious in right and symbol, does not greatly interfere with the general tenor of his practical and daily life, either for better or for worse. Nor are his dark-turbaned priests likely to teach much of what we should term morality; guileless of it themselves, why or how should they impart it to their flocks? A "Coptic marriage" has passed into a proverb; enough to say, that certain obliging and temporary family arrangements, said to prevail among the Abyssinians, are certainly and avowedly current among their fairer brethren and sisters of Egypt. It would be hard to suppose that the clergy deny themselves the indulgences which they permit or encourage in the laity; and the multiple precautions which fence in the exacter celibacy of the Patriarch himself, seem to imply the rareness of the virtue they ensure. The fact is, that in all respects, dress and ecclesiastical ceremonies excepted, the clergy and the laity are much alike; unless that the former, condemned by the endless Ritual of Dioscoros to pass half their lives in the mechanical and unmeaning repetition of words, and thus deprived of leisure for the studies and pursuits that in some degree form and instruct the mind of the latter, are considerably the more ignorant of the two. Even the Patriarch, when in his ordinary out-of-church dress, and seated among his town friends on an informal divan, might, to an unforwarned eye or ear, easily pass for a respectable landowner or a Cairo tradesman. Nor probably would his inner man, could we see it, offer any very distinctive mark of superiority either intellectual or religious.

But a darker stain than that of ignorance or common laxity of morals rests on the monks of Upper Egypt, who for centuries past have constituted themselves the purveyors and even the makers of that half-sex which guards and disgraces the harems of the east. Many of the unfortunate slave-children, brought into the convent for the purpose, die under the knife; and the infamy of the ascetic operator is aggravated by the guilt of murder. However, in our own time a revival of humanity, perhaps of shame, has rendered the employment of eunuchs much rarer than

formerly in most parts of the Turkish empire; and thus allows a hope that the failure of demand may finally induce the successors of Anthony and Pachomius to abandon a traffic insufficient to their greed, if not adverse to their conscience.

From the above sketch our readers may conclude, that although the Copts are gifted by nature with an intellect fully up to, and in some respects above, the average standard, education among them is desultory, partial, and following rather the local and Arab than any special track of its own. The ancient Coptic language is, indeed, still maintained in church rituals and the like; but though all among the clergy can read, we have never yet found any one of them who could understand the meaning of its characters. Coptic was, however, till within recent memory spoken by the peasantry in some towns of Upper Egypt, at Achmim in particular; but want of school instruction has allowed this curious remnant of the past to fade away and ultimately disappear altogether. French or English is rarely studied in a Coptic school, a subject of regret, considering how widely these languages are diffused or diffusing among the other inhabitants of Egypt. Thus in the general race the Copts are left behind, for want of acquirements so necessary that they are fast becoming common among the surrounding tribes of the land; and the old masters of Egypt have neglected, and still continue, with few and faint exceptions, to neglect the opportunity of re-asserting the empire of mind, since every other form of empire has irrecoverably passed away from them. In a word, the Copts are non-progressive, a position equivalent, where all else advance, to retrogressive; their qualities, good or bad, they have received by inheritance of birth, and still retain; but the talent not put out at interest, and that wrapped up in a napkin, or hid in the earth, are much alike in uselessness; and the fate of such is often to be wholly taken away.

The census of Copts in Egypt and its neighbourhood is variously given from one hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand; it certainly does not exceed the latter sum.

And with this brief notice of an aged, nor wholly invulnerable nation, we will conclude our present survey of "Eastern Christians;" and recommend our own Western Christians to love their brethren at least wisely, before they love them perhaps too well.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## AN EXCELLENT MEMORY.

THE sight of Redcombe Manor, with its park and grounds, when William Blackburn's greedy eyes first lit upon them from afar, had, as we saw, somewhat quelled his insolent spirit. The prize had seemed to him too great to lie within reach of his itching palm, just as at first a stake of unwonted magnitude appears to the gambler too great a stroke of fortune to befall him—an unlikely thing to win. But, as in the gambler's case, now that the first great obstacle—his father's opposition and disfavour—had been smoothed away with such apparent ease, his hopes rose all the higher for his late depression; all seemed to lie within his grasp. The evidences of the wealth about him—which would surely at no distant date be his—infated him with vulgar pride. The absence of his father from the luncheon-table removed what little check might have been imposed upon his behaviour; and with every glass of wine he swallowed, he grew more confident and coarse. With a shiver at the heart, Lucy Waller contrasted this boastful ruffian with him who had once sat in his place, and dispensed hospitality at that same table in so different a fashion. Ellen herself regarded her uncle with little less aversion. He had grown positively rude to Mr. Stanhope, and she felt genuinely grateful to the latter for the restraint which she well knew he was exercising upon himself for her sake and for that of her grandmother. His nature was fiery, and his wit keen enough to suggest such a retort as would have disconcerted even his half-drunken host, and covered him with shame; but he spared him. Mr. Waller, whose age might have fitly entitled him to reprove, or at least repress, and who was very skilful in the management of men, kept an unusual silence, and even seemed, to judge by the gracious manner in which he received the newcomer's rough sallies, to encourage them. As for Mrs. Blackburn, it is probable she scarcely caught the meaning of much that dropped from her son's lips; it was enough for her to know that he was in good spirits, and she rejoiced accordingly.

When the somewhat protracted meal was over, Stanhope asked permission to ring for his horse to be brought round; and when this was done, and the animal appeared before the terrace, he took his leave. The Squire had departed elsewhere, and the young man could not well help treating his son as his *locum tenens*; so, when he had

bidden farewell to the rest, he held out his hand to William.

"I will see you to the gates," returned the latter gruffly, taking no notice of this gesture; and he walked on in moody silence beside the horse and rider until they had turned the angle of the house, and were out of sight of the others. Then he stopped, and laid his hand upon the rein. "Look you here, Mr. Stanhope, or whatever your name is; I have something to say to you, once for all."

For the second time that day, Herbert Stanhope's fingers involuntarily tightened their hold of the handle of his riding-whip. "I never permit my bridle to be touched, sir," said he quietly; "that is also once for all."

William Blackburn's swarthy face turned ashen pale, and he let go his hold; but his voice slackened not one whit in its imperious tone as he rejoined: "Neither your horse nor you will be here again, I reckon, as you have been wont to be. I know you, sir, better than you think. Horses have done you much harm. You are not so rich, though you do live at Curlew Hall, but that a wife with money would be agreeable to you. Yes, yes. You have had nobody here until now to deal with but an old man already in his dotage, but henceforward it will be very different—do you understand? Then, listen to this: I do not choose my niece to be married at present—nor to you at all."

"Indeed, sir," returned Stanhope coolly. "Have you any other commands to communicate?—your wish, as you may easily imagine, will always be my law."

His contemptuous smile, even more than his mocking words, stung the other to frenzy; but repartee was not his strong point.

"You are vastly clever, Mr. Stanhope, but you will find you have met your match—another sort of match than that you expected here."

"I am not clever, Mr. William Blackburn, but I have a most excellent memory. I may say, indeed, as is said of the royal family, that I never forget a face that I have once seen, and I have seen yours before to-day."

"Never you mind that," rejoined the other doggedly, but not without a change of colour; "you will henceforth not see it very often, at least at Redcombe Manor."

"I am not so sure of that, my good friend," said Stanhope, taking out of his pocket a small book, and referring to it with much deliberation. "Let me see; yes, it was in the same year that *Donnybrook*

won the Derby, when I was quite a lad, that I first saw you — at Chester."

"I never was at Chester in my life."

"That's strange; for if you never were, it was your twin-brother whom I saw brought up before the magistrates for horse-poisoning. You were bribed to noble the *Khan* for the Chester Cup. I sat on the bench with my father, and remember the case perfectly well. You were in with Richardson and that lot, but they could only bring the thing home to *you*. Instead of using arsenic, you tried (not from motives of humanity, I'll be sworn) some corrosive sublimate, which you put in his oats, and so only sickened the horse. There was another charge against you for cutting the sinews of some horse that was entered for another race — but that fell through. But I well remember — for I was interested in the case, and watched it after you were committed for trial, you got five years — and they are not over yet, Mr. William Roberts!"

"It's a lie!" gasped the unhappy wretch through his white lips.

"That is — of course — what it occurs to a fellow — of your stamp — to say," observed the other, carefully lighting a cigar. "You have the misfortune to be not only a vile knave, but a gross fool. You don't even know when you are beat, you stupid cur!"

The relics of the other's Dutch courage oozed away to the last drops as he replied, with his evil face cast down, and his heel denting the soft gravel savagely: "What, in the Fiend's name, is it you want of me?"

"There, now, that's common sense, my man, and the nearest approach to reason which I have yet seen in you. What do I want as the price of my silence? — for not saying what I know about William Blackburn, alias Roberts, the man that poisoned the horse at Chester? Well, of course, I shall want lots of things."

"Then, *you* shall not have them!" exclaimed the ruffian passionately. "Do you suppose I'm going to put myself in your vice, to be screwed up as tight as *you* please, all my life long? No; do your worst. Supposing all you say is true (and I don't say it is — mind that), what harm can you do to me? Even, according to your own shewing, if I *have* done anything amiss, it's paid for — ain't it?"

"Well, not just yet: you had five years, you know, and they are not quite over; you must be out on ticket-of-leave, and are therefore still under the supervision of the police. You wince at that; but really you

ought to feel obliged to the foolish clemency of the law, which permits a gentleman of your class and character to be at large a single day before the date of his discharge. You have not, perhaps, studied the discussion upon this matter in your late retirement, but I assure you that the papers have been full of it. How you must have greened the chaplain, and how easy he must have been to 'green!' However, you certainly have, as you were about to say, been punished, and may consider yourself a free man. The law has been avenged, but not society. We can't admit horse-poisoners into county circles, my good sir; we can't allow them to marry into county families, my excellent friend — that is to say, if the crime is known. On the other hand, so long as the secret is preserved, they may do almost anything they please. Having brought the argument thus far, your sagacity is surely sufficient to permit of your drawing the deduction, that my silence must at any price be secured."

The force of contempt and bitterness could no farther go than in the young man's air and tone; but the fact was, that he not only despised the wretch before him, but also himself, for being under the necessity of making terms with such a creature. It is easy enough for a fool to be indignant with the vices to which he is not inclined, and to be blind to his own shortcomings; but Herbert Stanhope was no fool, and could not play the hypocrite with his own conscience. No one knew better than himself how vile was the part that he had undertaken to play in the house of his friend and neighbour; and the few words that William Blackburn had remarked upon it had secretly stung him far more keenly than all his sarcasms had affected the other. He had been, from the nature of his pursuit, acquainted with many a scoundrel, and had often had a common interest with them; but he had hitherto contrived, in that respect, to keep his turf experiences and his own private life distinct and apart from one another. At that very moment, he was justly liable to disgrace and outlawry among a certain set of persons with whom he had chosen to cast in his lot. He did not spare himself at all in the view he took of that matter, but his ways outside the betting ring had always been those of a gentleman. For the first time, he now found himself, in what might be called his home relations, about to become hand and glove with a villain. If William Blackburn's crime had not been one connected with the calling in which he had himself gone so far astray, he would not have been

so bitter against him; but we are as fanciful in our moral as we are in our physical disease, and he loathed him because he appeared to mirror some distorted and odious image of himself. "Well, your answer, sir?" exclaimed he harshly, as the other continued his excavation in the gravel, without a nod. "Or, shall I ride back and tell your father that I must decline the invitation he has given me to pass the next few days at the Manor? since, though I am sorry to lose his friendship, I cannot permit myself to share the same roof with a felon."

"No, no," said the other, with an affectation of frankness; "you can come if you like, of course. There is no need for us two to quarrel. You have only to hold your tongue, and you will have my good word with Ellen. The old man will cut up well, and there will be plenty for her as well as for me. I am sorry I was so rough with you—there, a gentleman can't say more than that. Henceforth, we'll work together; that's a bargain, and here's my hand upon it."

"There's no necessity for that," rejoined Stanhope coldly. "And perhaps it will be as well, since you shewed such temper just now upon the terrace, that we should not appear in public on the best of terms with one another. You can grunt 'How do you do?' instead of shaking hands, I dare say. I shall be here to-morrow for a day or two. Good-bye." And with a careless nod, Stanhope slowly rode away along the avenue, without once turning his head. Had he done so, he would have seen his late companion still standing on the same spot, and watching him with wolfish eyes.

"If I only had him in the well-hole at Formosa," muttered he through his clenched teeth, "and could watch from above the rising tide, and see him cling, and cling, and slowly drown; or, better still, if he could scramble near the top, and think he should be saved, and come within my reach, so that I might make him lose his hold—then, and not till then, should he and I be quits."

## CHAPTER XX.

## THRUST AND PARRY.

As Stanhope passed through the lodge gate, he beheld, to his surprise, and not with pleasure—for he was by no means inclined just then for company—Mr. Waller standing on the turf by the roadside, and evidently waiting for him. He had come from the terrace by a shorter way than through the avenue, and would have inter-

cepted him in any case; but not a little time had been taken up by the parley with William Blackburn, and the look with which the ex-M. P. received him, was pregnant with curious inquiry. "What on earth have you been doing, Stanhope? I began to get quite alarmed, not indeed upon your account, but upon that of our friend in the black dittoes. Have you been horse-whipping that wretched cub, or what? He was certainly very rude to you."

"As to that, he was rude to everybody; and upon my life, Waller—though, under the circumstances, it was not for me to interfere—if I had been a relative of any lady at table, I should have felt it my duty, at all hazards, to have put a stop to it."

"Well, the fact is it was a deuced delicate business, my good fellow. In the first place, the man was drunk, and remonstrance is not only thrown away in such a case, but sometimes makes matters much worse. He might have got angry and 'said things,' you know, before the women; then, again, if there had been a row, his father must have heard of it, and it would have ruined the poor devil altogether. They're not the best of friends, you see, as it is, and one would not have liked to have widened the breach, would one? It is about this very matter that I want to have a few words with you. I think we should give a chance to this just returned prodigal. If he is a beggar on horseback, we ought not to let him ride to the deuce."

"Why not?" asked Stanhope coldly, looking hard in the other's face. "I have been riding in that direction myself these five years, and you have never attempted to stop me."

"But you have not ridden so fast as this man, my good sir," added Mr. Waller smiling, "although I daresay you have outrun the constable. Besides, you are not the sort of man to take the advice of a neighbour, however well-meaning it might be."

"Then you think that gentleman yonder"—and Stanhope pointed contemptuously over his shoulder with his whip—"is one more likely to listen to reason?"

"No; not exactly that; he would not be easily led; but I think he might be driven, that is, if one knew, as *you do*, what sort of goad was efficacious."

"I know? How can I possibly know?"

"My dear Stanhope, why should you attempt to deceive me? If you have not been horse-whipping this fellow—which I confess I thought you had, by the expression of your face—you have certainly got the better of him in some way or



another. How does a man obtain a mastery over a fellow-creature wilder and more savage than himself?—By a stick. You have not employed a material one; you must therefore have used a moral one. Mr. William Blackburn is not a person to have been swayed by mere eloquence—for I have tried that with him myself—it is plain to me, therefore, that you have made him afraid of you. You are his Rarey—the tamer of this wild animal; and to come a Rarey, you must possess a secret.”

“My dear Mr. Waller,” returned Stanhope with an amused air, “your logic is most admirable, and I am quite sorry to think that you have only a poor country-gentleman like me to listen to it. I have never doubted your sagacity, nor has anybody in these parts even ventured to do so: at the same time, I have heard a whisper, now and then, which is not quite so favourable to your disinterestedness. May I inquire—in case, that is, you intend to ask me any more questions—how this matter can possibly affect you? Forgive me if I cannot easily believe that the welfare of Mr. William Blackburn is your sole consideration.”

“My dear young friend,” said Mr. Waller blandly, “I am sorry that at your time of life you should be so suspicious; a circumstance, however, which (as foreign to the generosity of your character) I attribute to your connection with the turf. I cannot help what evil tongues may say of me; though I am sorry their slanders have entered ears which I had hoped were friendly to me. I solemnly assure you I have no underhand motive in this affair whatsoever. I have no great interest in the young man, perhaps, although at the same time we should remember he has been severely tried.”

An irrepressible smile flitted across Stanhope's face.

“Gad! perhaps he *has* been tried!” thought Mr. Waller.

“You and I,” continued the ex-M.P., “have had no experience of poverty, and of the temptations to which it is exposed. We were brought up tenderly, and taken care of until we could take care of ourselves. This man, upon the contrary, has had a hard life of it from the cradle. I am no humanity-monger, as you well know, but I think we should look with charity upon such cases. I give you my word of honour that I honestly believe there may be good in this rough fellow; that if he only has a fair chance he may still turn out a respectable member of society; and it is

my fixed intention to do my best to make him so.”

“Upon my life, I begin to think Waller is in earnest,” thought the young man; “but then, he is such a very clever fellow.”

“And yet, my dear Stanhope, as I have confessed, my interest in this unhappy person is very small as compared with what I feel for his parents. They are both, as we know, kind and hospitable folks. Anthony Blackburn comes of as good a stock as yourself—one which we all respect—and his wife is in her way an excellent creature.

If this son of theirs goes to the dogs, his father will die of vexation (from the shame of it), and his mother of a broken heart: and again, let me ask you, by the way, is not the very circumstance of her devotion to him a proof that there is some good in the man? The Squire, it is true, has no such affection for him, but the main point is that the happiness of both of them is, for whatever reason, equally bound up in his future. His disgrace would destroy them, as well as do grievous harm to that charming young lady, their grand-daughter. You must surely go with me thus far, my dear young friend?”

Stanhope nodded with a grave smile.

“Well, these excellent people have been good enough to repose some confidence in me.”

“Now he is going to put a little water in the pump,” mused the other, “in order that he may coax out of it whole bucketsful.”

“They have reposed no confidence in me,” observed Stanhope dryly.

“No; but you have obtained some information from the fountain-head: let us put our two sums together, and add them up. It fell to me, as you know, to break the news just now of this William Blackburn's arrival to his father. He was terribly put out by it. I never saw a man more moved, that is, with anger. His behaviour was such that he thought it right (in explanation of it) to acquaint me with the cause of his displeasure. It appears that this lady, who has so lately died, was a person whom Mr. Blackburn strongly disapproved of, as respected her position in life, and that his son married her contrary to the Squire's wishes.”

“But now that she is dead, my good sir, I see no reason for a continuance of this ill feeling between father and son, and nevertheless it still exists.”

“What excellent sense you have, my dear Stanhope! It was only because I knew you to have so great a faculty of observation, that I made up my mind to tell you this



much — which I should otherwise have certainly treated as a confidential communication. Stanhope will be sure, said I, to find out for himself that this marriage with 'Bess' was a *mésalliance*. I can do no harm by the revelation; and with this fact to go upon, we may, as common friends of the family, take counsel for their benefit; and here we are laying our heads together accordingly. Now, since besides this marriage, there must have been something else to make the old man so bitter against his only son, the question is, What was it?"

And the ex-M.P. smiled good-humouredly, and patted the mane of his friend's horse, as though he would have elicited the views of that sagacious animal, as well as those of his rider, upon the matter in hand.

"You, of course, Stanhope, know all about it?"

The suddenness of the inquiry, accompanied by the rapid looking of the speaker into the young man's face, disconcerted him so, that if he had contemplated any deception, it would have been put to flight; but he had entertained no such design.

"Yes, I do," said he frankly. "At the same time, Mr. Waller, you must excuse me, if I claim for myself the same privilege which you confess you would have exercised. You say you would have considered it a breach of confidence to tell me what you have just communicated, had it not been within my own power to guess it. Now you, on your part, have *not* guessed what it is which has caused Mr. Blackburn and his son to be on such bad terms with one another; and notwithstanding my high opinion of your sagacity, I will add that I do not think it likely you *will* guess it. This is surely a sufficient reason for my silence; but besides, the matter in question was not revealed to me in tacit confidence only; I have passed my word to keep it as a secret. Under these circumstances, I need not, I am sure, say to Mr. Waller, 'Do not press me to break my word.'" And Stanhope gathered up the reins from his horse's neck.

"One moment, one single moment," exclaimed the ex-M.P., in accents which, though intended to be cheerful, could not quite disguise his chagrin. "You may be sure I shall not ask you to do wrong. But — only to relieve my mind — just tell me this," he looked furtively round and sank his voice to a whisper: "I know this unfortunate man has been in sad straits, but — he never *stole* anything, did he?"

"What a horrible idea!" ejaculated Stanhope. "He certainly did *not*. If such an assurance be any satisfaction to you,

you are very welcome to it. — And now good-day."

"Then it must have been poaching," whispered the other earnestly. "I am perfectly convinced that it was poach —"

But Stanhope touched his horse with his heel, and with a good-natured "No, no, Mr. Waller, that won't do," trotted away without another word.

"A very obstinate young man," murmured his discomfited inquirer; "and a secretive young man — which is a bad sign. I'll lay my life, however, it was poaching. How sharp the fellow took me up when I asked him, on the hill yonder, if he had not been 'in trouble' lately; and again, did I not see Stanhope smile when I talked of the man's having been 'severely tried'?" I daresay he was punished severely. The game-laws are most oppressive, and a disgrace to the country, as I always intended to say in the House of Commons. I'll write a pamphlet against them, and give it to William Blackburn to read; then I shall easily find out the truth. Though it was certainly poaching. Upon my life, I am afraid he has been in jail. That's what comes of 'Justice's justice.' Poor fellow! Why, I know lots of people who poach habitually, but then they're rich men; which is very different. From what the Squire said, it was evidently quite an early peccadillo; I dare say merely a boyish folly, which it was cruel in the law to so chastise, and still more cruel in his father to resent so long and bitterly. Yes, yes; it was a mere frolic, I feel sure."

Mr. Waller's face wore its usual smile, as he re-entered the avenue, in the middle of which it, however, grew once more serious, as he stopped and muttered to himself: "Eh gad, I hope he did not kill a keeper, though!" Then, adding briskly: "Let us hope he only shot him in the legs," he hummed an air, not very correctly, from the last new opera, and hurried gaily on.

In the croquet-ground were Ellen and Lucy with their mallets; they were by no means pursuing the game with the usual ardour of young ladies, but rather made it serve as a cover to conversation. Here follows the substance of their talk since luncheon.

"Well, and what do think of him, Ellen?"

"My dear Lucy, what a question! You know it is not the first time that I have seen him."

"That is scarcely an answer. — It is my green ball to play, is it not? — You must confess, at all events," (thud), "that he did his best to make himself agreeable."

Ellen sighed, and missed a hoop.

"You are thinking of something else, my dear, or you would not play so badly," remarked Lucy, holding up her finger reproachfully. "I shall think it my duty to tell Mr. Denton, I shall, indeed. Supposing even that meeting on the moor was accidental?" —

"What *do* you mean, Lucy? — I thought you were speaking of my uncle."

"Indeed I was not," (tight croquet, and ball sent to the confines of the grounds); "I am talking of Mr. Stanhope. You are aware, I suppose, that he was making love to you?"

"He certainly was not, my dear; I deny that there was even the appearance of it — but it so happens — in fact, he knows all about me and John."

"Ah? — You have one more ring to go through with that blue. — Then all I can say is, I don't understand it. You know, I suppose, that he has the reputation of being on the look-out for a fortune; and that his estate is much embarrassed?"

"I have heard that he is dissipated and extravagant."

"I don't know about dissipated, though he is doubtless extravagant. People are always apt to believe the worst."

"But I thought he spent all his time on race-courses."

"Did you? — Come, I've hit that green at last" (viciously). "Not all his time, surely, because there are times in the year when there are no races."

"I'm sure I don't wish to be hard upon him, Lucy; though I thought *you* were very severe with him on the moor, talking about his debts and his poverty."

"It was evident that you sympathized with him, my dear; and it is a sort of sympathy which is very dangerous. As to him, I saw at once that he had made up his mind to have your forty thousand pounds *down* — or whatever it is. He is come down here to get it, that is certain."

"My dear Lucy, how can you say such things? I have told you the truth; he is perfectly well aware of my engagement."

"And how came Mr. Herbert Stanhope to be 'perfectly aware' of such a delicate circumstance? But perhaps that is a secret?"

"No, indeed; he has been very intimate here — with papa more so than any other neighbour; and — they have been used to talk quite confidentially."

"Oh, I thought your grandpapa did not know that you *were* engaged?"

"My dear Lucy, what is the matter with you? You know, as well as I do, that my

heart is in John's safe keeping. But, even supposing it were otherwise, nothing would ever induce me to marry any man whose pursuit was racing."

"Well, I never heard that Mr. Stanhope was a blackleg; although I have heard all sorts of malignant things about him. I have known him from my childhood, and he is not, I assure you, such a wretch as you seem to think him."

"A wretch! Lucy? Indeed, I think nothing of the sort. But with respect to racing — it is a thing of which I confess I have a great horror."

"How wicked you must think me, then, my dear," laughed Lucy, "for I once made a little book on the Derby myself, stood to win eighteen pairs of gloves (all with double buttons); and I don't think it very much demoralized me."

"It does some people," returned Ellen gravely.

Lucy took her green ball with infinite pains, and hitting fair (which was rather unusual with her) through three hoops before she spoke again.

"Is your Uncle William fond of race-courses, Ellen?"

"I think so; at least he used to be so, long ago."

"Have you any reason to believe that he and Mr. Stanhope ever met before, Ellen?"

"None whatever. Why do you ask the question?"

"Because, at luncheon, I noticed Mr. Stanhope looking at you uncle more than once in a sort of puzzled manner, as though he were trying to recollect something about him. It may, however, have been only my fancy. — Is not that somebody calling 'Lucy?' Yes, it is papa's voice upon the terrace. Dear, dear! just as I was close to the post, and almost 'a rover.' I dare say he wants me to write something for him before the post leaves; if not, I will be back directly, my dear."

And off she ran. She did not come back, and Ellen continued to knock the balls about and muse.

"What *could* have been the matter with Lucy, at first so testy and almost cross, and then again in such high good humour? What must she think — what must everybody think of Uncle William and his behaviour? And yet it was not that which had put Lucy out, but something, as it would seem, in her own (Ellen's) conduct. What had she done to annoy her? Did Lucy guess at what had already happened between Mr. Stanhope and herself? If so, Lucy must be aware that any attentions he

might now pay her must be simply those of respectful friendship. If not, cognizant as she was of her engagement to John, that knowledge should have been sufficient to acquit Ellen in her friend's eyes of any charge of encouraging this man's addresses. But indeed, why should Lucy concern herself about the matter at all? and, above all, why behave so inconsistently with respect to Mr. Stanhope? She had abused him to his face in a manner that had been quite embarrassing to her (Ellen); and now she not only refused to hear a word against him, but even suggested imaginary attacks upon his character for the mere pleasure of controverting them. Then, how she must have watched him at luncheon, to get that idea into her head about him and Uncle William having met before! Was it possible — But no; while playing in the very croquet-ground that had been laid out to please her by dead Richard Blackburn, and in a spot so pregnant with tender memories, it could surely *not* be possible, and yet it was very strange."

## CHAPTER XXI.

## SNAKES IN THE CROQUET-GROUND.

IMAGINE the feelings of domestic circles resident in the Zoological Gardens upon an occasion of one of the Carnivora being let loose, by way of experiment, and permitted to perambulate the grounds like any biped visitors, and you have a very tolerable idea of the apprehensions excited in the Blackburn family by the advent of Mr. William. Perhaps we should even have put it stronger. Imagine the feelings of the aforesaid family after nightfall! Philosophical persons interested in natural history (but dwelling at some distance from the Regent's Park) would in vain protest that there was no real danger—that long confinement and abstinence from old habits of rapine would render the creature harmless. The keepers and their families, who know him best, would have a very different opinion. Perhaps, however, his own particular keeper, though agreeing with his brethren in a general way, would make an exception in this case, just as any Englishman in the Indian army thought that *his* regiment—*his* sepoys—would be true and merciful, though every other became wild-cats. The parallel between Mr. W.B. and the loose beast in question would then be complete, since Mrs. Blackburn was such a keeper.

Mr. Waller, too, who among other admirable qualities, enjoyed the faculty of persuading himself that everything would turn out as

he wanted it to do, had confidence that by tender and yet judicious treatment this poor animal, so long accustomed to the jungle, and perhaps even to human flesh, might be reclaimed—nay, rendered docile, just as was the lion in the poem, by some Una. Mr. Stanhope had no such expectation, but possessed that confidence in its good behaviour (at all events towards himself) which is inspired by the possession of a pocket life-preserver heavily loaded. Lucy, for her part, regarded the creature with loathing rather than fear; but Ellen, who had more experience of its nature, feared both for herself and others, and yet could be hardly said to loathe. She had a kind and simple heart, which found it difficult as all such do, to judge one so nearly allied to her by the same standard she would have applied to a stranger; a weakness pardonable enough, and yet one which has more to answer for in the encouragement of offensive persons than any other human frailty.

As for Anthony Blackburn, this unlooked-for advent of his unchanged son had been a blow from which he had but just strength to rally, or perhaps even only to appear to rally. He was not one whit afraid of him, but he did not feel himself competent to cope with him alone. He was well pleased, therefore, to have Mr. Waller for his guest just now; and if it was not for the same reason that he had invited Mr. Stanhope to stay at the Manor-house, it was because for that he had a still stronger motive. A union between this young man and Ellen, to which he had always been favourable, had become now not only desirable in the Squire's eyes, but absolutely imperative. If Stanhope wanted money, as he had heard, then so much the better, since it would make him the more eager, and the less likely to regard impediments. And yet, what a monstrous one was this which had thus unexpectedly arisen, and was certain every day to exhibit some new objectionable feature! Even on this account, not a day was to be lost in throwing these young people together as much as possible; and besides, there was the danger of William's disgrace—the punishment as infamous as the crime—becoming known, and blasting all Ellen's future. Sooner or later, that dread secret was almost sure to ooze out, even if this good-for-naught should not some day, over his cups, himself proclaim his shame; and then how hopeless would it be for any slip of the House of Blackburn to take root in native soil, or be grafted on a neighbour tree!

If William Blackburn had begun his new life as he intended to go on with it, it was

indeed a gloomy outlook. His interview with Stanhope had, it is true, counteracted the effect of the wine he had tossed off at luncheon; but that same afternoon he had taken a "drain" or two of a stronger liquor, and after dinner he had again drunk to excess. He did not join his father and Mr. Waller in the smoking-room, but staggered off to have a pipe by himself out of doors, to the great relief of perhaps both the seniors. His condition had been too obvious to be ignored even by the discreet ex-M.P., and he alluded to it in a philosophic and abstracted way between the whiffs of his cigar, as follows:

"It's a curious thing how any excitement of the mind is fed by wine, like flame by fuel. How many persons would fall into the error of supposing your son William to be downright intoxicated, when, in reality, he is nothing of the sort!"

"I am glad to hear it," returned the Squire bitterly. "I thought myself that he was drunk."

"Not at all, my dear sir: do not distress yourself with any such idea. The sense of the novelty of his position, and the rich social promise of it, are quite sufficient, assisted by ever so little wine, to have thus exhilarated the young man."

"Young? He is two-and-forty at least," responded the other gloomily, "and old enough to know better." Disparagement of this mild character was very suitable to the state of the poor Squire's feelings, for it did slightly relieve his choler; and, moreover, it was likely to prevent his astute companion from picturing to himself any graver causes for annoyance in his son's conduct.

"Still, my dear Mr. Blackburn, the very ease with which Mr. William became excited is to a certain extent (although I am the last to defend excess) in his favour. In the first place, remember, this is probably the first occasion on which, since his recent bereavement, he has permitted himself any enjoyment at all; and I daresay some sorrowful feelings would perforce intrude upon him, which he endeavoured by a few glasses of wine to dissipate. A more heartless man would have taken matters more coolly—at least that is my way of reading Mr. William's character, and I flatter myself I know something about mankind."

"Is it sir," said the Squire curtly. "Then I confess I have not discovered all these virtues in him; and since you have such an eye for them, I wish to Heaven he was your son instead of mine!"

"Well, we should not look a gift-horse

in the mouth," said Mr. Waller gaily; "and upon my life, Blackburn, for all these little blemishes, of which you make so much, I have half a mind to take you at your word."

"How do you mean?" inquired the other, looking sharply up.

"Why, I mean that though I cannot become his father, I should have no sort of objection, provided the arrangement prove agreeable to a certain young lady, of whom it does not become me to speak as she deserves—I should, I say, be very well pleased to be Mr. William's father-in-law."

"You would permit your daughter," began the Squire in tones that had almost as much of horror in them as of amazement—"I mean, would you really let her run such a risk?"

Mr. Blackburn had an honest liking for Lucy Waller; he had only seen as much of her as a septuagenarian host would be likely to see of his grand-daughter's friend and companion, but what he had seen had pleased him. It was certain that she was a dutiful daughter, and her father's right hand (as he often boasted), and it seemed to the Squire incomprehensible that Mr. Waller should be ready to intrust the happiness of such a child to one like his son William. It was true that the Squire intended his own Ellen to marry Mr. Stanhope, who was said to be addicted to dissipation, or at least to gambling; but, if Mr. Stanhope had been what he knew William Blackburn to be, her grandfather would certainly not have sacrificed her future to such a man, even to promote his most darling scheme. On the other hand, it must be conceded that Mr. Waller was really ignorant of William's thorough worthlessness, and took a most liberal view of his surface-faults.

"Risk," observed he slowly; "well, that is rather a harsh word. Of course, I must know more of the young man's character and antecedents"—here he shot a glance at the Squire, who shifted his limbs uneasily—"and, above all, must assure myself that such a match would not be distasteful to my sweet Lucy. But there is always more or less of uncertainty—a risk, if you must call it so—in every marriage; that is, unless young folks have been brought up together from the nursery, as Lucy and your late nephew were. Of course, that would have been the match most consonant with my own feelings, but man proposes (as poor Dick did), and Heaven settles things its own way. Our families, it seems, were not to be united by means of that branch—but, still, they may be united. I honestly tell you I have not

much to give my daughter *down*, Blackburn—my capital is so locked up in different speculations—but she is not a pauper, and perhaps, if things turn out as I expect them to do, may some day be almost as great an heiress as your own dear Ellen.—I conclude, by-the-bye," observed the ex-M.P. abruptly, "that though your purpose should hold to leave Redcombe to your grand-daughter, that your son would be suitably provided for?"

"If he were to marry eligibly—such a young lady as your daughter, for instance," said the Squire earnestly, I would give him—nay, I would settle upon herself—a very considerable sum."

"That is spoken like yourself, Blackburn, and I am sure you mean what you say, although, of course, our present talk may bear no fruit whatever—we may be building the merest castle in the air; and, at all events, any such event as that we have been contemplating must yet be a great way off. Your son is bewailing a recent calamity; my daughter also is suffering, although not so recently, from a similar bereavement. When speaking, on one occasion of her sorrow, poor thing, she even made use of the expression 'widowed': a common loss, however,"—here Mr. Waller, under pretence of taking a fresh cigar, applied himself to composition—"itself sometimes attracts, so great is the power of human sympathy, two bruised and tender hearts towards one another."

"I noticed that that scapegrace son of mine paid a great deal of attention to your Lucy," said the Squire thoughtfully. "She is clever, and has a will of her own; but I honestly tell you, Waller, I doubt whether even she will ever make a silk purse out of"—

"Stop at 'purse,' interrupted Mr. Waller quietly; "I assure you she is a capital hand at making silk purses."

"If the silk purse is made out of the material in question," answered the other gravely, "I promise you it shall be well filled. If I could only see my son respectably settled in life"—

Here a terrible scream, apparently from the garden, broke the silence of the autumn evening; and Mr. Waller, with an activity beyond his years, rushed to the open window, and letting himself drop through it by his hands, hurried to the croquet-lawn, while his host made his way thither more circuitously by the front door.

For all the former's protestations to others, and specious arguments with himself, he had his own misgivings concerning his projected son-in-law, and in the instant

when that sound broke forth it flashed upon him that some unpardonable rudeness of Mr. William Blackburn's had evoked it, perhaps from Lucy herself. To do Mr. Waller justice, he would, in such a case, have done his best to wring the neck of that only scion of the House of Blackburn on the spot, and it was with some such intention that he had made such extraordinary speed. There was, however, nobody upon the lawn save Mr. William himself, who was lying face downwards among the croquet-hoops, ejaculating "Snakes, snakes, snakes!" at the top of his voice. The ex-M.P. cast a hasty glance up at the boudoir window, which, to his great relief, was closed, and then approached the sufferer with cautious steps.

"Snakes, snakes, snakes!" reiterated Mr. William.

"What is the matter, sir? There are no snakes at Redcombe," said the Squire, making his appearance from the terrace.

"There *are* snakes, snakes in my boots," persisted his son.

"Come, come, not in *both* boots, my good friend," observed Mr. Waller persuasively.

But by dint of violent struggles, Mr. William got himself free of his boots, and pointed to the empty pair with unaffected horror.

"Do you see snakes?" inquired Mr. Blackburn of his guest in much amazement.

"Ay, sea-snakes," persisted his son—"snakes from Formosa, snakes from the well-hole, so tall that you can see their heads at top. Look at their tongues, their long forked tongues! They've come to tell you about it. And yet, so help me, I never did it."

"What in Heaven's name, does all this mean?" inquired the Squire despairingly.

"It means exactly what I told you, Blackburn, that your son's brain is over-excited; he has fallen over one of these hoops, and the shock has put him off his head. He's quiet enough now, you see. But here come the servants: just say it's a fainting-fit, and leave him to me."

The ladies were fortunately in the drawing-room, which was on the other side of the house, and the music of the piano had drowned the sufferer's cries.

"Don't alarm your mistress, or the young ladies," were Mr. Waller's first words; "but take Mr. William quietly into his own room by the back-way.—You need not go for the doctor, sirrah" (for a groom was already starting towards the village); "but lend a hand here, as I told you; your young master is overcome by the heat of the



weather, that's all.—The case, my dear Blackburn, is quite simple, and I understand it perfectly well."

"Do as Mr. Waller bids you," said the Squire sharply, for the serving-men hesitated somewhat to lift such a burden up; the damp white face, the chattering teeth, the protruding eyes, were all so instinct with horror.

"Gently, now — gently," said Mr. Waller; "and you that have his wrists, hold them firm."

It was well he gave that order, for twice upon his way the patient writhed and struggled like a madman. "The snakes had wound about his limbs," he said, "and had him fast;" but at last they got him to his room, and into bed. Then Mr. Waller dismissed the servants, and he and the Squire stood alone by the bedside. William had fallen into a half sleep, full of starts and mutterings, and his eyes, which had looked as though their lids could never hide them again, were now almost closed.

"The paroxysm is over, my dear sir," said Mr. Waller soothingly; "and I don't think we shall have any more trouble with him, poor fellow. However, I'll just sit with him a bit, while you go down into the drawing-room, and explain matters to the ladies; it is better not to trust to the servants' silence. You can say that I have some important letters to write, which will account for my absence easily enough. And be sure you keep Mrs. Blackburn away from her son; say he is asleep, and must on no account be disturbed, for the fact is, in cases of this kind, the mind is apt to wander, and" —

"Is it *Delirium Tremens*?" inquired the old man huskily.

"Well, yes, it is undoubtedly a touch of D. T.," said Mr. Waller reluctantly. "It's a very slight attack — but still, you must keep his mother away. The very best of us had better not talk of ourselves, unreservedly, before our mothers. But as for me, I'm a man of the world, and not easily shocked."

"Nevertheless, it is my place to be here," said the Squire gravely, "and not yours."

"My dear sir, forgive me, but this is madness" — began Mr. Waller.

"Nay, forgive me," interrupted his host peremptorily; "this is my own house, and this is my own son, and I must have my own way."

"Very good, Mr. Blackburn; I will do my best then to smooth matters below stairs. If he shews any symptoms of violence, ring for me; but if he continues to sleep on, as I trust he may, all will go well enough."

"I understand; and I am greatly obliged to you, Waller — deeply obliged."

"Don't mention it, my dear sir. I am delighted to have been of any use in this little matter. Such things occur every day, I do assure you, in the best families in the land; only it's better not to talk about them. Keep a good heart, my dear friend — and there's the bell within reach — and shall I bring you up the newspaper or anything? It is weary work to have to sit still and watch, though I'm quite accustomed to it, and don't mind it in the least myself."

The Squire shook his head to the offer of not only the newspaper, but to the implied renewal of Mr. Waller's proposal to take his place by his son's pillow; and the ex-M.P. softly closed the door behind him.

"An obstinate old gentleman," mused he, as he went down-stairs. "If he would have let me nurse that fellow, I should perhaps have known as much as Stanhope. — What the deuce, by-the-by, could he have meant by Formosa and the well-hole? I must make a note of that. I wonder whether this was his first attack. By its short duration, I should think that it was; and yet it was precious sharp while it lasted. — Formosa, eh? This is what comes of sending one's eldest son where French brandy is eighteenpence a bottle. Gad, how he must have soaked!"

#### CHAPTER XIII.

##### AFTER LONG MONTHS.

IF Mr. Waller imagine that, in default of gaining possession of the history of William Blackburn's past, the nature of his disposition would still afford him some hold upon his young friend, he was disappointed; since, in the first place, D. T. was a malady not altogether unknown at Redcombe Hall, for the Squire's brother Charles had more than one bout of it; and secondly, Mr. William himself was no more sensitive about the malady in question than if it had been the gout. The very simplicity of this gentleman's character — that is, his coarse and homely habits of vice — made him difficult to deal with for the ex-M.P. (who had been accustomed to influence men in a high state of civilization, if not of intelligence), and puzzled him, just as one ignorant of the use of the small-sword will sometimes puzzle an accomplished fencer.

When, for instance, a few days after this attack, Mr. Waller expressed his pleasure at seeing the young Squire up and about again, the latter replied, with startling frankness: "Well, I believe what you say for once, Mr. Smoothtongue, for, if I had

popped off the hooks, it would have spoiled a nice little game of your own, I reckon."

If Mr. Waller had had to consult his own feelings only, he would certainly not have remained, and far less have suffered Lucy to remain, a guest at Redcombe after that speech; but he could no longer afford to indulge his own self-respect, a luxury which, to say truth, he had been accustomed to more or less forego for many years. His affairs were getting into greater embarrassment daily, and no other escape seemed to offer than that he had once looked upon as an eligible course, but which he was now obliged to own to himself was in fact a desperate remedy. He had not the courage to speak to his daughter upon the subject; but she well understood his critical position, and could perceive, he hoped, for herself the pressing necessity that compelled him to wish her to become William Blackburn's wife. Her conduct was such as to make him daily reproach himself with the cruelty of a scheme which he had adhered to nevertheless; and though she had always done his bidding, it astonished him by its dutifulness. That she should evince the slightest liking for the man who, short as her acquaintance had been with him, had disgraced himself half-a-dozen times in her very presence by intoxication or bad language, and of whose conduct in the house and village there were already so many evil reports that it was scarcely possible but that some had reached her ears, was not to be expected; but it was something, and more than Mr. Waller had hoped for, that she did not shrink from the young Squire with abhorrence. She allowed him, if not to pay her court, to be more gracious to her than to others, and rather ignored his clumsy advances than forbade them. These attentions, indeed, now that he understood she was not his niece's humble companion, were not so rude and undisguised as heretofore, but they were such as a young girl of spirit might have naturally enough resented, especially in a suitor whom she regarded with disfavour, and yet she did not resent them. She even listened with patience to Mrs. Blackburn's dissertations upon the character of her son, which perforce did not so often take the form of eulogium (as they had done before his arrival), as of apology for his faults; and why should she do this unless she had made up her mind to make excuses for them herself.

Not only did her father argue thus, but Mrs Blackburn also, who was as anxious for the watch as he, and much more hopeful of its results; and so these two at least began to believe that in due course of time

the thing was likely enough to come to pass. Curiously enough, however, this belief did not seem to be shared by the old Squire, who had so early expressed his approval of the plan, or, if it did, the contemplation of it seemed no longer to afford him pleasure. He had become of late a changed and broken man, and went about like one weighed down by some burden too heavy for him to bear. Some thought that in his old age the strong will which had supported him through half a century of hardships, had at last given way, and that he was fairly cowed by the rude profligate, his son. But the observant ex-M.P. held that there was some other cause which bowed that stalwart frame, and thinned those gray hairs day by day so visibly; for, in the first place, although he manifested a great repugnance to William Blackburn, if not an absolute loathing, yet he shewed no fear of him, but flamed up on occasion against that social offender, so that the culprit shrank before his ire; and, in the second place, William behaved himself with some respect towards his father, for a reason which Mr. Waller had not far to seek, and under an influence of which that manager of men was very jealous. He well perceived that it was to Herbert Stanhope that all improvements in the young Squire's behaviour was owing, and envied him the possession of that rod of iron with which he ruled, so advantageously for the general good — if not for his own. As to whether Stanhope was gaining ground in Miss Ellen's good graces or not, Mr. Waller could not decide, nor was it indeed of much interest to him to know. The pair were not often, so far as he could observe, or could learn from his daughter, alone; and, indeed, with the exception of the old Squire, who shut himself up more than ever in his little room, in company only with his bottle of strong waters, the inmates of the Manor-house herded together a good deal, now the young Squire was arrived, just as small birds keep close company when a hawk is hovering. *Tête-à-têtes* were not frequent, and still less a solitariness which might be intruded upon by the unwelcome Mr. William, whose presence beneath that roof had also a marvellous effect in keeping it free from occasional visitors. Nobody that had not a special reason for it put themselves in the way of meeting the new arrival, who was even in the middle of the day as likely to be in liquor as not. Even Mr. Mowbray Moffat avoided the place, as indeed he had good reasons to do, for he had experienced the young Squire's insolence. The house, in short, was tabooed, as Anthony Blackburn had prophesied it would be. Lucy

never left it, even for the garden, unless accompanied; but Ellen, when her uncle was supposed to be safely disposed of for the morning — and the safest place was the skittle-alley attached to the public-house in the village, where he liked to surround himself with a few choice sycophants — occasionally took long walks alone. Otherwise, if he found the opportunity, he would reproach her in graceless fashion upon the preference shewn to her by her grandfather, and point out to her the infamous injustice of those testamentary intentions of which she could not be ignorant. Her only refuge against such persecution lay in a quarter to which he felt tolerably confident she would not venture, from maidenly reserve, to apply. If the good could only profit by the vices of the wicked, as the wicked advantage themselves by the virtues of the good, merit would not so often as it is be its own reward.

In one of these lonely walks of hers, Ellen found herself where she would not have been had Herbert Stanhope been at his own house, in the pine-wood that skirted the grounds of Curlew Hall. The autumn was far advanced; but in that odorous and sheltered spot, with the sunshine striking down where the clearings were, and the keen wind busy only in the tree-tops, where it made a murmur like some distant sea, it seemed to be summer still. The place had become a favourite haunt of hers of late; in its welcome seclusion, and fresh and fragrant air, she breathed more freely than elsewhere, and shook off the oppression which had settled down on almost all at home, though on herself the least, for in that atmosphere of plots and fears she fed on hope, and lived, in imagination at least, another life than that which hard fate had for the present assigned to her.

She had wandered further than usual, or than she was aware of, almost to the verge of the wood which fringed the hill above the Mosedale Valley, in a line with the embankment of the reservoir, when she suddenly came upon what was very rare in that green solitude, a fellow-creature. A man with his back towards her was sitting under a tree, with a book in his hand; he was probably sketching, for his fingers moved rapidly; but, although artists were not uncommon about Redmoor in the warm weather, it was late in the season for that migratory race. She turned to retrace her steps, but the dry twigs crackled under her tread, and he looked round and rose. It was John Denton. She uttered a great cry of joy, and flew towards him — then stopped in wonder. His face was pale and sad, and though

he could not have failed to recognize her, he did not stir a step. A strange thought took possession of her: it was not himself at all, but his wraith, come to tell her that all she had been living for was in the grave.

"John, dear John," cried she trembling, "why don't you speak to me?"

The tones were sad and hollow enough for any ghost, which answered: "It is for you to speak, Ellen, not for me: you know all that I would say."

She moved towards him, stretching out her arms. "Dear John, what is the matter? What has happened?"

"Nothing unusual," said he coldly, "that is, with persons of your class. I daresay, to you it does seem nothing; but with me it is far different."

"Are you mad, John Denton?"

"Not yet, God help me," answered he bitterly.

"Then you will remember this, John."

She took from her bosom a little note-case, in which lay a faded sprig of heather: he had plucked it and placed it in her hand on that walk across the hills from Slogan when he had asked her to become his wife.

"I remember that well," said he, "only too well. Are you going to give it me back? — as ladies like yourself give back the rings and jewels of their old loves when they take on with a new one. Oh, Nelly, Nelly! I knew that girls were weak, and that you being what you are, would be more tried and tempted than other girls; but I did not think you would sell yourself for gold, nay, for less than gold, for an old name, and a long pedigree with a fool at the end of it."

"As true as the blue sky is above us, John, I understand nothing of what you say. Whatever dreadful things you have to tell me, in Heaven's name speak out. What is it?"

"Is it possible that fourteen months of life among fine folks can make a woman so false as not to know it herself!" answered the other. "Well, it is not much matter, perhaps; but what I have heard from every mouth at Mosedale is, that Miss Ellen Blackburn (who was once so humble as to think of wedding such a man as I), is plighted to Mr. Herbert Stanhope of Curlew Hall."

"That is a lie, John."

"A lie! It is one that is more believed than truth; the whole town rings with it."

"If the whole town had told me the like of you, John, nay, if the whole world had said it, and your lips had not confirmed their words, I would not have believed it.

I have been tried, indeed — tried by your absence, tried by the lack of that which is my life-blood, the speech, the touch, the look of him I love, but never tempted, John; for in temptation there is some attraction, some delight, and I have never felt one touch of joy but in the thought of you."

"True heart, forgive me," exclaimed he, snatching the weeping girl to his breast. "I am all unworthy of such love, dear girl; but I have been all alone in the world so long, without one word to gladden me, and with ten thousand of late to pierce my heart — and you know Mr. Stanhope is staying at the Manor-house, Nelly. My very work, which was once so dear to me, has become flat and stale; I have been in this very place a score of times, note-book, in hand, as now; and yet, see, nothing has been set down in it, because I could think of nothing, except you!"

"Then, that is why I have sought this wood so often, John, and loved it; my heart must have known that you were here, and brought me hither. But what brought you, dearest?"

"Well, not so much my heart, dear Nelly," said John, smiling, and tenderly smoothing her brown hair, "but my business. I have been at work at the embankment yonder for some time; and while my men are at their dinner, I step in here for solitude, and to make certain calculations, the result of which, as to-day, has been often a blank page."

"I knew you had been employed on the Reservoir, John; I went thither before you came, expressly to be able to picture you there — but I thought you had gone. Lucy, Miss Waller, told me that the affair would not keep you above a day or two."

"Ay, that's Mr. Waller of Mosedale's daughter, I suppose; but her father has misinformed her altogether. You see, Nelly," and though his arm was round her waist, and his eyes looked lovingly into hers, it was curious how abstracted and business-like his tones became, "it's a much more serious job than these directors imagine, and it will put out Flywheel immensely; but I can't help that. The whole concern wants looking to. I have been tinkering it up as well as I can; but it's my opinion the mischief is deep-seated, and must have a much more effectual remedy, or there will be great risk when the spring comes. For my part, I mean to state as much in my Report. But the fact is, the Company have very little cash, and don't want to be involved in expenses; and Flywheel is their engineer you see, not I.

Nothing can be more penny wise and pound foolish, not to mention the danger, as it seems to me. But there, why am I wasting precious moments, talking of these dry business matters, when the dearest girl in the world is waiting to hear me say for the fiftieth time how much I love her! And I do say it, and seal it, my own darling."

"I like to hear you talk of your calling, John, and to see you so interested in it. I am prouder of it and of you than any one can possibly be of the things you were deerying just now, such as birth and blood. Nay, it is men like you who alone make birth and blood of any value, for who could be proud of ancestors who have done nothing?"

"A very logical view, my dear Nelly," said the young engineer, his own cheek flushed with something of pride; "but not one generally entertained, and especially by your charming sex. Now, I wonder what the forefathers of this Mr. Herbert Stanhope, for instance, have done to make the race so much esteemed?"

"You always were jealous of Mr. Stanhope, John," returned Ellen smiling; "and I have a great mind to punish you by praising him. He has his faults, and, I fear, his vices, but I can tell you, that I, in common with all at Redcombe Manor, have every day much cause to be indebted to him."

"To him? How so?"

"Because he is the only person who has any influence over Uncle William. — You know my uncle is come back, I suppose?"

"I have heard that," said Denton gravely. "He is not improved; I am afraid if half I hear about him is to be credited."

"He is not what one would wish him to be, John," sighed Ellen; "very far from it. He frightens us all sometimes — even his mother herself; he is so strange and violent. Aunt Bess is dead, poor thing; and oh, it's a sad story!"

"But he is going to repair that loss, as I understand, eh, Nelly? A widowed life does not suit him."

"What do you mean, John?"

"Why, is he not going to marry Miss Waller? That is what they say at Mosedale."

"Lucy marry Uncle William!" exclaimed Ellen. "Why, what will they not say at Mosedale about marriages? Oh no, John; I am quite sure that is not true."

"Well, it's odd she and her father should stay at the Manor so long, when their own house is close by; although, indeed, for that matter, Mr. Stanhope does

the same. Mr. Waller was so good as to offer me hospitality, only he said matters of urgent importance prevented his being at home just now."

"Yes; Lucy said you were to be asked to be their guest; but grandfather pressed them to stay on with us."

"Indeed," said Denton coldly. He was naturally incensed with the old people, and had not even inquired after them. "Then you don't think the young lady is going to be your aunt-in-law!"

"Most certainly not, John. She does not like Uncle William nor his ways at all. Oh, they are such bad ways!"

"What do you mean, Nelly? Is he rude and brutal? Why do you suffer such things? Why do you remain under the same roof with such a fellow, when I have one to offer you?—not so fine a place as Redcombe, I daresay, but still fit for even a lady like you."

"Oh, it isn't that, John. You know how gladly I would come to you—marry you, my own darling, but"—

"But what?" answered the young man softly. "Why not be mine at once, dear Nelly? Have you not done enough, suffered enough, for duty's sake? I will not speak of my own wretchedness; but yet I suffer also. Is an old man in his dotage—"

"Hush, John, hush! I cannot listen to such words. You know how good grandfather has been to me all my life; and you must not ask me to desert him now, when he needs me more than ever—much more. I think it would kill him if I left him now."

He has much, very much to trouble him. He is so changed of late, you would not know him. I am his only comfort, poor old man. Have patience with me, my own love."

She nestled in his bosom, and pleaded with such tearful eloquence, that he could not gainsay her. "I will try to have patience, Nelly, for yet a little longer; it cannot be very long, surely."

"Patience and faith, darling. Promise me you will have no more doubts. I am yours till death, and no other's."

"I do believe that, dearest."

"God bless you for those words, John! How thankful I am to have heard you utter them. But I must go now. No, you must not come with me, nor be seen with me. You know I promised not to meet you; and then, if Uncle William only guessed—What's that?"

She started from his arms in terror; but there was no sound but the sighing of the wind above them.

"You are afraid of this William Blackburn," said Denton gravely. "I must stop that."

"No, no, John; I am not afraid; at least, not on my own account; but something dreadful always seems impending. Do not detain me longer. And remember, dear, have faith."

She was gone in a moment, threading the wood with a swift and noiseless step; and the echo of her latest words seemed to be taken up by the tree-tops, which whispered above his head: "Have faith—have faith."

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*Too True: a Story of To-Day.* (New York: Putnam.)—This is a story which is scarcely pleasant to read, though it is told with more than ordinary power. A German count, who has ruined himself and attempted to murder his wife, flies to America, ingratiates himself with a lawyer's family, becomes a suitor for the hand of one daughter, finds out that the other is in possession of some valuable jewels, and contrives to get himself transferred to her. One day the strange humour seizes him to tell his own story; it strikes one of the family, a lad of fourteen, who has always hated him, as being "too true." He soon persuades his father to send him to Germany, being resolved in his own mind to discover the truth. He does discover it, and writes home; but the letter comes too late; the count, after adding another robbery, murder, &c., to his list of crimes, has eloped with

the girl. The father brings her back to die, but she has the comfort (we can imagine that it is a comfort, though we do not understand why it should be) of knowing that she was really married, the first wife having died two or three days before. The count is left at large to impose upon other genteel families. There is some very good character-painting in the book. The younger daughter, beautiful, but deformed by an accident, whom every one has always humoured; the brave, vigorous-minded elder sister, the type of a quiet, sensible American girl; old Mrs. Grizzle, with her vulgarity intensified, but her kindness of heart not impaired by the sudden acquisition of wealth, these and others also are good sketches; and the whole book has a "real" air about it.

Spectator.

"LETTERS OF REQUEST."—Begging Epistles



From Fraser's Magazine.

## POACHING ON MONT BLANC A DOZEN YEARS AGO.

AFTER spending one of the hottest July days that I can remember in roaming about the gardens and galleries of Versailles, I returned to Paris in time to dine with an old friend and start in his company by the night mail to Dijon and Dôle on our way to Geneva. At 4.30 A.M. we were stepping into the *malle-poste*, which in 1857 afforded the swiftest means of reaching our destination. The little vehicle could only take three passengers, but was urged along all day at the full speed of four horses, which were never allowed to walk even in the steepest parts of the ascent. Now I am not going to act the part of a Conservative *laudator temporis acti* so far as to deny the advantages of railways over coaches in general; but I have no hesitation in asserting that those who now wriggle over the rails through dark tunnels and profundities from Amberg to Geneva can have no kind of conception of the marvellous treat which awaited those who approached it over the summit of the Jura. Our only companion was a very agreeable and cultivated Frenchman, who turned out to be the préfet of the department through which we were passing. From Les Rousses the horses were kept at an ambling trot up the long slopes of the mountain: the appearance of the country was very dull and monotonous, but we could see that we had attained a considerable height; presently the gentle trot upwards was exchanged for full speed, and our French friend said, "Regardez maintenant, vous allez voir quelque chose."

The préfet was right. We flew round a corner, and in an instant saw, as it were by enchantment, a new and more beautiful world. The whole Lake of Geneva, with its more than fifty miles of length, lay stretched out before us and beneath, a vast crescent of sky-blue shining under the cloudless canopy of heaven. At our feet were the green slopes and picturesque villages through which lay the remainder of our road; and, far across the lake, high above the intervening ranges of Savoy, Mont Blanc and his attendant peaks rose in spotless beauty through the deep blue sky. In no part of the world have I ever seen so sudden a transition from absolute dulness to indescribable perfection; but as the railroad keeps far away, it is highly probable that what we saw will never more be beheld by the speed-loving generation of tourists. With a sensation as of having seen heaven opened before our eyes, we rapidly descend-

ed to Geneva; and arrived there at four o'clock.

Mont Blanc was our destination, and the following evening found us at Chamouni, where we were welcomed as old friends at the Hôtel de Londres by M. Edouard Tairraz and his good-tempered wife. The Hotel d'Angleterre had not yet flaunted its banners and its balconies over the surrounding buildings: and comparative simplicity was the order of the day. But amidst this comparative simplicity there existed one enormity, which we were resolved to resist: the extortionate tariff and tyrannical code of the guides cried aloud for redress, and we had come with the secret purpose of striking at least one blow at the system, and anticipated no small amusement from the attempt. The guides had established a kind of trades union in its most objectionable form; good and bad were all equally inscribed on the roll, and those who wanted their services must take them in order as they came. It was of no avail to plead old acquaintance with one whom you knew by past experience to be in every way a superior man; in vain did the best men complain that their better education, their greater linguistic or scientific knowledge was thrown away: they were all levelled by the obdurate roll, and you must take whoever was pointed out by that detested document. The men who could thus tyrannize over one another and over the public in one way could of course do so in other ways, and they established a system of charges which was outrageous enough to be ridiculous if it had not been too annoying to laugh at. By this Draconian code every traveller who wished to go up Mont Blanc was obliged to take four guides, and if the party consisted of two or three friends they must take eight or a dozen guides as the case might be. Each of these men received one hundred francs, so that every traveller had to pay 16*l.* to begin with, besides extravagant charges for feeding the party and numerous extras which were sure to be tacked on at the end. On the whole it may be considered that 25*l.* apiece, the usual total, was rather a large payment for a couple of days' amusement in the ascent of what is after all the easiest of the very high mountains of the Alps; at all events, it was eight times as much as we had paid in the previous year for the much more difficult ascent of Monte Rosa. We knew that a party of plucky Englishmen had lately discovered a new route from St. Gervais, and succeeded in reaching the summit of the mountain without the assistance of guides beyond the top of the Aiguille du Gouté. The regula-

tions of Chamouni were not binding upon the inhabitants of St. Gervais; but we wished to do something towards bringing the old route more within the reach of the aspiring public, especially on account of the great advantages offered by the hut of the Grands Mulets over the cold and dreary halting-place upon the somewhat formidable Aiguille. We spent the first day in a leisurely ascent of the Brevent, which enabled us to study "the monarch" for several hours with our telescopes, and gave our legs the first stretching after a long imprisonment in London. The next day we increased the good effect upon our own limbs, and saved two Americans a certain number of francs by undertaking to be their amateur guides to the Jardin. This was good practice, and we then began the preparations for our main undertaking.

A man named Bossoney held what in diplomatic language would be called the portfolio of guide-chef; that is to say he sat behind a table in a little room called the Bureau des Guides, where he was engaged in the perpetual study of the book of the roll, like Buddha absorbed in the contemplation of his own perfections. He was a hard man, one who would like to reap without sowing; and we knew that poaching in his preserves would be considered an unpardonable offence. Nevertheless the thing was done; and, as Englishmen are rightly taught to study the means by which their forefathers obtained liberty, so ought the rising generation of mountaineers to know and appreciate the difficulties gone through by their predecessors before the complete establishment of the right by which they are now enabled to break their necks as they please, and in such company as they may select for themselves.

We knew that any revelation of a wish to ascend Mont Blanc accompanied by any amount of supplication would be perfectly useless with M. Bossoney; we therefore had recourse to subtlety and throwing dust in his tyrannical eyes. We walked quietly into the lion's den with a "Bonjour, monsieur Bossoney." "Bonjour, messieurs," he replied.

We proceeded to tell him we had an idea of going to the Grands Mulets, but we had heard that the tarif was higher than we liked paying —

Fain would I climb, but that I fear to pay.

He told us, as we knew well enough, that we must have four guides between us, and pay them forty francs each. "But, my dear Monsieur Bossoney, you know we have both had some experience of the high

mountains; we have both made the ascent of the great and terrible Monte Rosa; surely you will allow us to make such an expedition as that to the Grands Mulets with a smaller number of guides than if we were raw novices who had never been beyond the Montanvert."

We might as well have spoken to the winds. The inexorable Bossoney replied that such was the *règlement*, and though he might perhaps have wished if possible to make an exception in our favour, yet there was nothing but to submit. It was like the Mussulman repeating, "There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet." Pretending to be convinced of the propriety of his reasoning, we shifted our ground and asked who would be the guides whom the tender mercies of the roll would entrust with our preservation. He saw that we were knocking under, and with a gracious smile upon his unprepossessing face he looked into the mystic scroll, and informed us that the favoured individuals would be Zacharie Cachat, Jean-Pierre Payot, Michel Simond, and Pierre-Tobie Simond. It so chanced that my companion had on a former occasion been satisfied with the last of these men, and I knew by repute that Cachat was one of the best men in Chamouni. So we submitted with apparent reluctance, and said something corresponding to "what must be, must."

The next thing to be done was to order Zacharie Cachat, as the leading man, to come to the hotel for instructions for the morrow. For fear of anything going wrong, we took good care not to let M. Edouard, the landlord, have an inkling of our scheme; and even the faithful Auguste Balmat, though an independent friend, was kept in equally total darkness. In due time Cachat was confronted in the bureau of the hotel with ourselves and M. Edouard, who was in his normal state of slight confusion, arising from a superabundance of champagne. He was alive to business, but he preferred that his wife should set down at the desk and do duty as scribe. Hearing that our intention was to go to the Grands Mulets next day, and to take a fitting amount of food for the occasion, he looked very solemn; and, waving his hand with much dignity to his better half, he said, "Ecrivez donc, madame." Pondering for a moment, as if he were going to dictate terms of peace to a conquered nation, he told her to begin the list with two chickens, two bottles of St. George, four bottles of Beaujolais. The worthy man was evidently getting into the regular swing, but we saw he was starting from false premises: it was

quite evident that the supply proposed by him would be altogether inadequate for the refreshment of the party during the two days which would be required for the fulfilment of our scheme. I stopped him therefore by remarking that we did not intend to return the same day; that, in fact, our great object was to see the sunset from the Grands Mulets; and that, as we could not recross the glacier after dark, we should be obliged to spend the night there and have the additional satisfaction of seeing the sun rise next morning. In fact we should want provisions for two days instead of one.

"Ah! vous voulez coucher làhaut?" said Edouard. "Eh bien! donc, madame, mettez le double." So the provision list started afresh with four chickens, four bottles of St. George, eight bottles of Beaujolais, and so on, tapering off with the usual additions of tea, coffee, sugar, etc., which, being charged at fabulous prices in proportion to the amount supplied, form very profitable though humble items in a Chamouni bill. It was lucky, however, that we had given no sign about Mont Blanc, as everything would have been doubled again.

Business over, we had nothing to do but enjoy ourselves for the evening; and after dinner wandered out into the flowery fields to watch one of those magnificent sunsets which are so deeply impressive among the mountains. Darkness was already fast approaching in the valley when the summit of Mont Blanc was still glorious with the last light of its rosy crown, and it was with no small pleasure that we looked with confidence for fine weather in the morning. It was intensely interesting to watch this splendid object, and to think of the delightful excitement which we hoped to derive from it in the coming day. If we succeeded in reaching the summit, and if old Bossoney spied us with his telescope, how great would be his wrath, and how great would be our satisfaction in laughing at his beard!

Next morning, about ten o'clock, we made a very quiet start, carefully avoiding the rather ostentatious death-or-victory kind of appearance which used frequently to characterize mountaineering parties in the days when transcendents of Le Mont Blanc were sufficiently rare to have their names inscribed on shields against the wall of the hotel. We let the men straggle out of the village, and followed them at our leisure, feeling our tendency to inward chuckling slightly tempered by the knowledge that the enemy might still anticipate our inten-

tions and spoil our sport. We were not quite easy at the sight of a fifth man having joined our four guides; he might be an emissary of the detested Bossoney sent to frighten our men from playing any tricks with the supreme government of extortioners. Cachat's explanation that it was a porter hired by the guides themselves to assist them in carrying up wood and provisions restored calm to our troubled mind, and we began to feel as poachers must be supposed to feel when they have successfully dodged the game-keepers. So we go happily over the well-known path, twining through the rich shade of the fir-trees, cheered by the ripple of lively streams, and climbing between beds of pink rhododendrons, till we begin to leave all vegetation behind, and the last few straggling scraps of half-dead pines warn us to pick up sticks while we can, if we have any wish for a hot supper and warm feet that night on the Grands Mulets.

Each one was now condemned, like the mythical Man in the Moon, to carry his own fagot, as we filed round the narrow path which leads towards the Pierre de l'Echelle and the upper part of the Glacier des Bossons. Reaching the former in about three hours after leaving Chamouni, we prepared for an early dinner on the mountain-side. Up to this moment we had not allowed a word or a sign to give the slightest indication to our guides that there was anything behind the scenes: we were only supposed to be quietly going to the Grands Mulets, the situation of which, at about 10,000 feet above the sea, I presume to be pretty generally known. But, as the simple feast drew to a conclusion, and the guides looked merry over the red wine, we thought the hour had come for revealing our aspirations, and we asked them whether they would go with us to the summit of Mont Blanc, in defiance of Bossoney and all his works. Old Simond's rather dry face relaxed in a moment; Zacharie's sagacious eye twinkled with delight: and the younger men tossed their hats in the air with shouts of satisfaction. We then found that we were not the only members of the party who had been enjoying the possession of a secret. The guides, who knew that we had both had tolerable experience among the mountains, came to the conclusion that we could not be going to content ourselves with the Grands Mulets, and had secretly supplied themselves with all that would be required for the ascent of the monarch himself.

This was so far highly satisfactory, and loud was the laughter as each man of the

company produced his contribution of hidden stores. Tobie Simond was, I think, the man who brought from within the lining of his coat a canvas-sided lantern, which folded up flat, but which when set into proper form would be invaluable for examining crevasses in the early morning. Others had packed long snow-gaiters under chickens and bread, and one had brought a packet of prunes, knowing that at great altitudes nothing is so comforting to the mouth as the continual sucking of their stones. Seeing that all due precautions had been taken, we proceeded to draw up a solemn treaty. It was agreed that if the four men liked to go with us to the summit we would pay them each the conventional hundred francs, though nothing would have induced us to take eight men, according to the rules, on the same terms. They wanted us at first to promise to pay any fines that might be imposed upon them for breaking the rules, but we absolutely refused, remarking that they could easily do that out of the difference between a hundred francs and the forty which would be their pay to the Grands Mulets only. We carried the day upon this point, and were thinking what should be settled next, when old Simond, the Nestor of the party, who seemed deeply pondering, suddenly brought down his hand with a violent slap upon his knee, and with the energy of a sudden inspiration, proceeded to unfold a scheme, the ingenuity of which was worthy of a better cause.

"Listen to me," said he, in effect; "I will show you in a moment what should be done; follow my advice, and neither the gentlemen nor ourselves will have to pay fines. Voyez donc! We are seven men in all, is it not so? Two gentlemen, four guides, and one porter. Well, my friends, suppose that one guide remains at the Grands Mulets to keep the porter company, while the two gentlemen and the other three guides go to the top of Mount Blanc. Ha! do you not see? Depend upon it that Bossoney and other people will be looking out to-morrow morning, and with their telescopes they will count *five* men upon the summit, but there is no telescope in Chamouni that can make them see the *difference between one man and another* at such a distance as that. We will return home in the evening, and we will tell all the world that one of the gentlemen ascended the mountain in company with the full number of four guides, but that the other gentleman was ill and remained at the Grands Mulets, with the porter to take care of him. So we shall not have to pay fines at all. Is it

not so, my friends? Have I not spoken the words of wisdom?"

The wily orator "paused for a reply;" his proposition was received with the hearty applause of his comrades, but we were obliged to remark that though he might have spoken the words of wisdom, they were certainly not the words of truth. We could have nothing to do with lying, and they must boldly take their chance of the consequences of discovery. *Magna est veritas*. Besides, our special object was to show the absurdity of the rules, and we wished to tell everybody that we had proved it by making a successful expedition without obeying them. Another very sufficient reason for rejecting the old fellow's proposal was the recollection that Bossoney, in spite of other shortcomings, was not such a fool as to believe the story. It would have been very difficult for myself and my friend to decide who should play the part of the "malade imaginaire," for Mont Blanc puts a brand as of a red-hot iron upon the faces of those who invade his noble head.

The little congress broke up in a very happy frame of mind; we had all made up our minds to ascend the mountain, and we felt that the delight of the expedition would be doubled by its illegality. Everybody knows that "stolen joys are sweetest." So the knapsacks and the fagots were picked up again from their stony bed, a rickety ladder was found and dragged forth from its usual hiding-place under the Pierre de l'Echelle, and away we went across the glacier. It was in a terribly torn and broken condition, and a novice would have been puzzled as to how he should get upon it at all: a series of vast blocks and melting pinnacles of ice at the edge of the glacier seemed to separate us from the smoother region beyond, but Cachat soon solved the problem by marching up to one of the thinnest of the obstructions, in which the melting process had formed a sort of central window. This was widened by a few blows from his axe, and we safely passed through this eye of an ice-needle, which led us to the well-known and magnificent route across the glacier. We were sometimes picking our way along a white ridge with a deep blue chasm on each side of us, beautiful to behold; sometimes scrambling among blocks of ice at the bottom of a crevasse into which they had tumbled, and looking carefully upward to see if any more were ready to follow their example and alight upon our heads; finally, when all other means of progression failed,

we had to appeal to the ladder as the only means of clearing an otherwise impassable obstruction.

So far, so good. The scrambling was to us only an additional charm in the day's adventure, but a far more serious difficulty was suggested by the appearance of the weather. Wild ugly clouds, which at first contented themselves with sailing far over our heads, began now to show unmistakable signs of coming to close quarters; and presently we found ourselves pelted by an unmerciful mixture of hail and rain. The hail however was a good symptom; in a short time the air grew cooler and brighter; and as we laboured up the last snow slopes to the hut upon the Grands Mulets, we could see the raindrops on the edge of the roof glittering like diamonds in the restored sunshine. The sunset was glorious, as the sky was by that time perfectly clear. Of the thousands who have watched from below the magnificent spectacle of departing day among the high Alps, comparatively few can have experienced the sensation of forming, as it were, a part of the rosy-tinted picture. It is, however, an experience well worth the making. The sun was still above the horizon for us, while the shades of evening were fast closing around Chamouni in the depths of 6,500 feet below the wild rocks where we were sitting. Presently the sun made its last grand expiring effort: the gloom beneath us increased, but our airy perch was glowing with deep rosy light, and nothing could be more marvellous than the contrast presented by the dull grey upon one side of every rock, and the flush which warmed the other side with transcendent glory.

The dark shadow crept up the mountain towards our feet; extinguishing the last glow upon the Grands Mulets, it passed upwards to the summit of Mont Blanc, and the night of death reigned upon the cold white mountain. I know of few things so deeply impressive as the sudden transition from the red glow upon a lofty mountain at sunset to the ghastly white which immediately succeeds it: it is painfully suggestive of the strong man subdued by him who rides upon the pale horse.

Well, let the dead bury their dead: one day was gone, and we had not much time to prepare for the next, which we naturally expected would be one of the most interesting and exciting in our lives. *Le jour est mort. Vive le jour!* We prepared supper in the hut after a very primitive fashion; a fire was already burning in the little stove, over which was an iron bowl, stuffed full of snow as a preliminary to soup. We

and our guides sat upon the floor, doing justice to the landlord's cold meat and chickens, and throwing at intervals into the seething cauldron, not exactly "liver of blaspheming Jew," but goodly drumsticks, with lumps of mutton and bread. Somebody suggested the addition of wine, and a bottle of Beaujolais was instantly poured into the broth. In due time this rather singular mixture was boiled into a warm and comfortable nightcap, and I doubt if any production of the Palais-Royal was ever more thoroughly enjoyed. The stars were shining in fullest splendour when we took a last peep at the weather; and the moon, though hidden from us by the intervening masses of the Monts Maudits, lighted up the opposite Dome du Gouté like a wall of silver. About half-past nine o'clock we lay down upon the boards with knapsacks for our pillows; one guide at a time sitting up to whittle at the sticks and feed the fire. Under the combined influences of hard beds and excitement, neither I nor my companion contrived to get a moment of sleep. We knew, however, that a good deal of rest and strength is derived from the mere fact of lying still, listening to the guides breaking up wood and snoring alternately by the weird light of our little fire. At last our chief cook gave vent to a snore of such astonishing and almost superhuman force, that with one loud laugh all the rest of the party gave up the pretence of sleep, and, finding that midnight was near at hand, began to prepare for departure.

Coffee and eggs were cooked, long woollen gaiters were produced, and the lantern was set in order among many a lively jest about our enemy Bossonney, who was slumbering in the valley, and like charity, thinking no evil as to what might be taking place so far above his head. About half-past twelve everything was ready: one by one we filed out of the hut, fastened together about three yards apart by the rope round our waists, the first man carrying the lantern and keeping a sharp look-out for crevasses. The search became very interesting now and then, when near the base of the Dome we found ourselves among cavernous clefts imperfectly covered with snow, and requiring some care to avoid what would at all events have been a disagreeable smothering in the cold hours of the morning. We passed steadily upwards to the Petit Plateau, hurriedly crossed the débris of fresh avalanches of ice from the séracs of the Dome, and about four o'clock found ourselves among the vast sublimities of the Grand Plateau just as the summit of Mont Blanc full in front of us was tinged with the first touches



of that glorious rose-colour which generally promises a successful day. It was a moment of the purest delight. There was no difficulty in choosing a place for our temporary camp: we were on a huge plain of spotless snow, in as firm and excellent condition as could be desired. So down went knapsacks, and squatting round them in a ring, we proceeded to breakfast upon part of their contents. The pipe of contemplation followed, during which we leisurely looked over the work before us. How magnificently rose the mountain, still 5,000 feet over our heads, glistening under the deep blue sky, and now of a certainty within our reach!

The whole party being in very lively spirits, we began to think that as the expedition had commenced with illegality it might as well conclude with irregularity. Why should we go up by the ordinary safety-seeking route of the Corridor, when the long-deserted slopes of the Ancien Passage tempted us to the excitement of following a track which we heard had never been pursued since that day in 1820, when Dr. Hamel's guides were killed in attempting it? What says Cachat to this proposal? He makes a careful observation with the telescope, and then delivers an oracle to the effect that the snow up there, to the right of the Rochers Rouges, is in such good condition that we may try the experiment without fear of avalanches. Any one at all conversant with the general view of Mont Blanc will know that the route we proposed is far more direct to the summit, though considerably steeper than the ordinary one. It was only abandoned in consequence of the danger of avalanches from such a highly inclined slope. Little did we then care for extra steepness; and, with the sage Cachat's opinion against any present danger from the state of the snow, we resolved to go up by the Ancien Passage, and complete the tour by returning down the Mur de la Cote and the Corridor.

The greater part of our provisions were left behind in knapsacks, only a small store for a treat being taken with us to the summit. We went straight across the German Plateau in a line for the mountain, and soon began a steady climb up a slope of firm snow. The inclination was at first moderate, but it soon became steeper, and the comfortable snow was exchanged for so hard a surface that step-cutting was necessary. Before long, the slope grew steeper, the ice harder; we had to make much deeper steps for safety, and began to think of old saws about the unprofitableness of short cuts. The progress was slow, and

hours were passing; still, whenever we raised our heads, there were the same vast blocks of ice about the summit of the Rochers Rouges, looking scarcely nearer or larger than when we had selected them as landmarks from the plain below. At length, however, we approached the base of an enormous buttress of ice which presented a perpendicular wall of glistening blue to the height of nearly 100 feet. We had calculated on being able to pass to the left of this splendid obstacle, and steps were accordingly cut slantingly with great care, up the surface of a slope which we found with a good instrument to have an inclination of 60°. As the guides, however, knew no more than we did of the route we were taking, it was less surprising than disappointing to find on laboriously reaching the left corner that we were cut off from that side by inaccessible profundities of ice. Meanwhile a severe north wind had been rapidly increasing, and most of us began to feel the bitterness of severe cold in a situation where it was impossible to quicken our movements or to trust our feet out of the steps. Cachat himself seemed particularly suffering and anxious. However, as all progress was cut off on the left, we were compelled to turn to the right, and he began to make the best of the way. The situation was peculiar, and rather calculated to try the nerves of a man who knew that he was frost-bitten and falling below the mark. He led the way, hoping to warm himself by the hard work of cutting steps horizontally along the base of the wall. We followed him cautiously, all taking the utmost care of the rope; our left shoulders touched the vertical blue ice, while, on our right down went the slope which, beginning at an angle of 60°, swept clean away to the Grand Plateau, nearly 4,000 feet beneath. Presently he turned round to me, and asked for a drop of brandy from my flask. This I gave him, and he cut a few more steps, but he then turned round again and said sorrowfully, "Je n'en peux plus."

Payot was next behind me in the line, so he went to the front; but it required all our care and steadiness to untie him from his own place and pass him forward to the front of the discomfited Cachat. Once there, he soon finished the task: we passed the obstacle safely with the aid of a few more steps; and, turning its corner, soon reached a moderate slope which brought us to the Petits Mulets, a small rocky point near which our route meets the ordinary one from the Corridor. Here we halted for a while and examined the case of poor Cachat: he took off his boots and stockings

and found both his feet completely frost-bitten. He said he could go no farther, but would stay behind on the sheltered side of the rock, and rub his feet with snow while we completed the ascent of the mountain.

The sky was now cloudless, and our faces were fast burning with the light of a July sun upon the snow; but the cold of the furious north wind was terrific. Its penetrating power may be inferred from the fact that when I took out my thermometer at this point, it stood at 12° below freezing point, though it was in a wash-leather case and had been all the morning in the inside breast-pocket of a strong coat buttoned close to my body. Leaving our chief in the snugest place to be found among the rocks, we pushed upwards, with the comfortable knowledge that we had no further difficulties to contend with, if only we could keep ourselves from being blown away into space. The upper slopes of Mont Blanc are easy enough: we had nothing to do but to go ahead independently of one another, and the wind was our only enemy. My companion had a fur cap with sides to protect his ears and tie under his chin. I tied my wideawake on my head with a handkerchief; and while one hand held the alpenstock, the other was employed to keep my coat, waistcoat and shirt from the fate of being scattered to the winds. It was useless to speak to one another; even a shout could not be heard easily amid the terrible noise of the wind, roaring over ridgy snow and driving countless pieces of detached ice over its hard and irregular surface. My feet were perfectly insensible by reason of the cold; but, as I was otherwise in such good condition as to feel no difficulty or inconvenience in the ascent, I found that I could dispense with the ordinary use of my alpenstock, and turn it to considerable profit in another way. Carrying the friendly pole with the iron point uppermost, I made a vigorous thrust with the wooden end at each foot as it came in turn to the front. This is a device which I recommend with the utmost confidence to those who may find themselves in similar situations. Small changes delight those who suffer from monotony; prisoners love to watch the evolutions of a spider; and so I found a distinct interest in hammering my own feet during the least agreeable part of the expedition. There was a certain amount of sport in the uncertainty of hitting or missing, and there was much comfort when at length a slightly stinging sensation announced returning life. The only drawback was that a few days afterwards my feet appeared covered with bruises to

attest the accuracy of my aim; but amongst communities who are in the habit of wearing shoes and stockings it will be admitted that such a consideration is a "trifle light as air."

In this fashion I steadily pushed up the *calotte* of the mountain till, lifting my eyes for a moment, I found that no one was in front, no one was near me. Looking back, I was horrified to see my friend some distance below, lying on his back with the guides standing over him. I ran down to him as fast as I could against the wind, and was not a little glad to find that he was only suffering from a sudden fit of that strange vertigo which is occasionally experienced at high altitudes. A few drops of brandy and a few moments' rest completely restored him to his normal strength and activity. We made a vigorous rush, and presently were brought to a standstill by finding that there was nothing more to climb. Our feet were on the summit of Mont Blanc, and our eyes ranged over the plains and mountains of North Italy. An attempt to stand in such a wind on the highest crest of snow would have involved the probability of some of the party being blown over the precipices of the *Peteret*; so we crept cautiously down a few feet on the southern side, and seated ourselves comfortably on the snow. We were facing the sun, and completely sheltered from the wind. It was peace after the noise and uproar of a battle; a battle waged against the noisiest and most turbulent of the spirits of the air.

Ah! how pleasant it was to pile arms by sticking our alpenstocks into the snow, to empty the provision-knapsacks, and to sit down upon them with our backs to the sunny side of the dazzling crest! The only casualty was poor Zacharie Cachat, whom we had been obliged to leave far below us, kicking his frozen feet against the rocks. He had started with such a complete appreciation of the fun involved in a poaching expedition, that we were very heartily sorry to miss his ruddy face when in the hour of triumph we drank the health of the guide-chef with the liveliest of ironical cheers. We fastened the thermometer facing the sun; but though it was now ten o'clock on a cloudless July morning, the mercury did not rise above 24° Fahr. during the half-hour which we spent upon the summit of the mountain. The terrible *vent du Nord* made itself felt, even though we were sheltered from its direct violence. Only a few feet over our heads we could hear at short intervals the hissing, crackling noise caused by volumes of dry snow and

loose pieces of ice being driven by the blast in those long white streamers which, seen against the dark blue sky, are described in the valley by the expression—"Le mont Blanc fume sa pipe." The wind seemed irritated by our having escaped from its grasp, and by the gaiety and happiness which prevailed in our little party as we proceeded to smoke our pipes also on the sheltered side of the snow-roof. It began to throw out skirmishers with the object of turning our flank; and one of them, coming round the corner with a savage puff, succeeded in blowing down my alpenstock, which at once began to roll over the steep snow-slope at our feet. In an instant I jumped forward to catch it before it could make a fatal leap over the boundless precipices which form the southern side of the mountain; but one of the guides stopped me with a scream of terror, and then made it sufficiently plain that it was better for me to lose my alpenstock than to run the risk of breaking my neck in an attempt to recover it.

There seemed much reason in this line of argument; so, though I felt a little sulky at being interrupted in what I intended for a rather brilliant dash, I resigned myself to the fate of my trusty weapon in the same way as some people are said to resign themselves to the misfortunes of their animate friends. It had only a few yards to roll: then it clicked against a rocky edge; and in the next moment was out of sight, bounding from crag to crag until perhaps its iron spike acted as a skewer to one of "those few sheep" which nibble the wilderness at the base of the Peteret, many thousands of feet below.

I did not allow myself to be seriously disturbed by the prospect of descending without this customary assistant to the human legs: we were engrossed in utter enjoyment of the situation. Let us think about this matter for a while: for, depend upon it, whatever scoffers may say to the contrary, it is well worth while to spend a scrap of one's earthly life upon the summit of Mont Blanc. Those who have been there are not likely to forget the spectacle revealed to them: and to those who have not been there, or in some similar situation, it is almost useless to attempt a description. I would rather confine myself to an analogy. Doubtless most people must at some time or other have watched one of those majestic clouds, grey below and turret-clad with white above, rising almost to a point in the clear summer sky; and wondered what would be the sensation of riding on the highest summit among the celestial blue: the top of

Mont Blanc will probably explain it to them. The height is sufficient to present the eye with a panorama of about two hundred miles in every direction, so it is easy to take a map and calculate what may be seen in favourable weather, though it is impossible to describe how marvellously the various objects are transfigured by the effects of atmosphere and distance. The principal phenomenon to be recorded on this occasion was one that I never saw before or since during a considerable experience of the High Alps. The sky was cloudless, so that we could delight ourselves with observing range after range of snowy mountains, and tracing deep valleys leading to the Italian plains; but everything in the marvellous landscape was tinged with a delicate shade of pink, as if we were looking upon a wonderful world through the medium of a rosy gauze. Others must decide if we were right, but we arrived unanimously at the conclusion that this unusual and almost mysterious appearance must be connected with the fact that the air around us was charged with infinitely fine spiculae of powdery snow, flying wildly before the wind.

Before leaving our magnificent throne it may be worth while to examine for a moment the position of those worthy but most misguided individuals who apply the *cui bono* principle to mountains, and ask with solemn air, "Did the ascent repay you?" To ask such a question of a true mountaineer is simply to insult him, as completely as we should insult a pious man by asking him whether, after all, he really thought it worth while to go to heaven. Repay? Repay for what? We were neither sick nor sorry. We had not been fatigued or uncomfortable, and if time had permitted we should have liked to remain all day where we were, in the enjoyment of a happiness that was perfect. It must be admitted that the wind was very cold: this however was no serious inconvenience, and may be dismissed as trivial. Though the barometer stands at sixteen inches on the summit of Mont Blanc, representing an abstraction of nearly half the atmosphere, yet we were not conscious of any effect whatever from the rarefaction of the air. We had not felt any desire to halt in the upper regions of the mountain, but went steadily up; and, as I have said before, were astonished at finding ourselves so easily on the top-most ridge with nothing in Europe above us.

So at least we thought at that time. A touch of sorrow might have mixed with our satisfaction if we could then have

dreamed that in these later days a generation would arise to blaspheme the supremacy of Mont Blanc in Europe, and to declare with trumpet sound that the Caucasian Kasbek and Elbruz shall reign in his stead. There was something cruel in this part of the excellent work done by our three Alpine brethren; but on the other hand it, is very comforting to find that they have done something towards dispelling another delusion. In recording the fact that at a height of three thousand feet above the highest of the Alps, they found no more inconvenience from the rarefaction of the air than if they had been upon the Rigi, they tend to establish a hope that properly trained and healthy men may some day reach far greater altitudes than have yet been touched on the Himalaya and the Andes. Even if Mount Everest and Kinchinjunga may remain invincible, surely some one will be found to complete Humboldt's work on Chimborazo, or to look down upon Bolivia from the heights of Sorata and Illimani. As the modest nature of our expedition was inconsistent with champagne, we had no opportunity of testing the statement that all the contents of the bottle would fly away in a fountain as soon as the cork was removed; and as we had no pistol with us, we were not able to prove that the noise made by firing it would be almost, if not quite, inaudible; but we satisfied ourselves that, as we could detect no change in the force of our voices, the pistol would in all probability have produced its customary sound.

And now for the descent. After nearly three quarters of an hour's enjoyment of the situation, we jumped to our feet and remounted the short snow-crest which had formed our sheltering wall. The old enemy was waiting for us; and as one by one we rose above the ridge, the savage wind swept torrents of highly dried snow and fine spikes of ice into our devoted faces. This was of no consequence, however, on such a summit as Mont Blanc, the *calotte* of which is entirely free from dangerous places: we had nothing to do but to shut our mouths, keep our clothes on our backs, and rush down as fast as we could to the rocks of the Petits Mulets. There we found poor Zacharie Cachat in much worse plight than we had expected, and it was probable that it would have been wiser if he had kept in motion by going on with us. All his efforts to restore circulation to his feet had failed, though he had been rubbing them with snow in the most sheltered spot that he could find, and he now looked pale, and seriously alarmed. We were of course

very anxious about him; but his courage rose to the occasion and he determined to meet a grand danger with a heroic remedy. He packed up his boots and stockings, and declared that he would go down the mountain barefoot, as the only way of saving his feet! Such a proceeding could not but remind me of the Irish reptiles' disappearing before St. Patrick, when

The snakes committed suicide,  
To save themselves from slaughter.

But Zacharie was firm, and we started.

From this moment we turned away from our route in the morning; and, instead of descending by the long, icy slopes which we had found so difficult in the Ancien Passage, we now made for the head of the Mur de la Cote with the object of returning by the regular route, and so completing an interesting circuit of the Rochers Rouges. The state in which we might find the surface of the famous Mur was a matter of some importance to us. Cachat's barefooted state, and my divorce from my alpenstock, would have been awkward drawbacks if we had been obliged by hard ice to cut our steps down an incline which averages about 45°. Fortunately, this was not necessary. We found a good coating of snow half-way up to our knees; and, after a little caution in the steepest part of the slope, we finished this stage of our descent with a laughing run down into the entrance to the Corridor. We were in another climate. The white streamers of snow in the blue sky showed how the north wind was still furiously rushing and charging over the slopes where we had so lately fought and beaten him; but now we were in perfect peace. The masses of the Monts Maudits and the Tacul barred us completely from the north and east; the sun was beaming intensely upon all the spotless white around us; the air was perfectly still, our faces began to burn, and we found ourselves transported, as it were, from the Arctic regions into the soothing temperature of a hot-house.

As we ascended by another route, there was no track to guide us on our way down: by some mistake we got too far to the right, and found ourselves entangled among some of the most gigantic masses of ice that I have ever seen, separated by caves and crevasses of the purest blue. To have such a sight was a full reward for the annoyance of losing our way for about half an hour: presently, by dint of some gymnastic efforts, we emerged from the glacial chaos somewhere nearer to the Grands Mulets than we ought to have been, at the head of a long steep slope, leading straight down to the

Grand Plateau, on the further side of which we could see with a telescope the little heap which we had made with our knapsacks in the early morning. There was a question among the party as to whether we should at once descend the snow-slope, and take our chance of what we might find at the bottom. Cachat was naturally rather out of spirits; but Payot, after a few minutes' inspection, sat down on the edge, and lifting his feet in orthodox fashion, was seen sliding over the snow at a pace which soon landed him safely on the plateau. We could guess how far he had descended by the smallness of his apparent size at the bottom, and then we all started off joyously in the same fashion. A few moments of that sensation which is caused by a dream of flying down a staircase of everlasting length, were sufficient to place us by his side; and a few moments later we were all camping happily on the snow round the provisions which had been left below in the knapsacks. Then we put the rope on once more, and quickly descended over the long snow-slopes which were fast melting under the heat of a blazing, grilling sun; and the consciousness of excruciating pain conveyed to poor Cachat the happy intelligence that his feet were returning to life, though much scarified by the ice. We paid a brief visit to the hut on the Grands Mulets, packed up our snow-gaiters and remaining possessions, found the ladder by the side of the great crevasse, and safely re-crossed the Glacier des Bossons. The excessive heat was melting the ice-pinnacles at a rate which made great care necessary as we picked our way among their overhanging crests, and occasionally we had to insure quickness and accuracy of foot as we passed the most threatening places; but, as usual, a reasonable amount of precaution succeeded in landing us on terra firma, where rhododendrons and gentians welcomed our return. Cachat exhibited the horny soles of his feet, scored by the ice into a state resembling that of the crackling of roast pork, and resumed his boots and stockings with a grim remark that the heroic remedy had been in some degree successful. At the first convenient spot we made a halt to take stock of the party.

My companion and myself were in perfect order, but it now appeared that Payot and Tobie Simond were partially blind, especially the former. Old Simond was the only one of the four who was in as good condition as when he started: nothing seemed to hurt his wiry frame. Some goats were browsing near us, and he at once led a party to capture some of them; milking

them upon the palm of his hand, he rubbed the milk into the eyes of his suffering companions, declaring that to be the best of all possible remedies. In spite of everything, however, we were obliged to lead Payot down for the remaining three hours which separated us from Chamouni. The unusual severity of the wind in the upper regions had greatly added to the effect of the burning glare experienced for so many hours upon the spotless snow: the two men had to spend the next day in a dark room, with no light beyond that which may have been contributed by their pipes. Cachat afterwards informed us that, still persisting in heroic remedies, he had occupied much of the same time with his feet in a pail of ice and water: in a day or two he recovered so completely that he was able to accompany us for the next six weeks in a constant round of mountain adventures, during which he seldom felt any pain in his feet, except when he was more than usually warm and snug in his bed. So there was no great harm done, and general hilarity was in the ascendant.

As we had anticipated, the telescopes of Chamouni had suddenly revealed the fact that a party of men had, in opposition to all notions of propriety, and in defiance of the puissant laws of the locality, dared to present themselves on the summit of Mont Blanc. We had left in a perfectly quiet and unobserved fashion on the previous day: the whole village turned out to look at the offenders when they appeared about seven o'clock in the evening. Groups of surly-looking men, representing the inferior majority of the Chamouni trade's union, glared and growled at us as we crossed the bridge; but we soon had the satisfaction of being shaken by the hand and heartily congratulated by several of the best and most educated of the fraternity, who, as is generally the case in similar circumstances, objected to being put on a level with inferior men, and welcomed those who would do anything to emancipate them from tyranny by helping to break through the code which enforced it. The landlord and his wife, who certainly owed us no great gratitude for taking steps by which we accomplished our expedition at less than half-price with about a third of the usual provisions, showed the most generous satisfaction at our success, and supplied us and our guides with abundant libations of gratuitous champagne. That night we held high festival till a late hour; and next morning, with the small exception of badly burnt faces, found ourselves all the better for Mont Blanc.

Our chief guide was punished by the



guide-chef with the loss of two or three turns on the role; but as we employed him till near the end of the season, this infliction had no effect upon his serenity. The others were fined twenty or twenty-five francs each, which left them with quite a sufficient margin to be happy. We lodged a formal protest with the intendant at Bonneville, which, though it produced no immediate redress, must have served as one nail in the coffin of the ancien régime, which was soon after successfully attacked by the president of the Alpine Club, with the powerful aid of D'Azeglio, and mountaineers were relieved from the most oppressive and ridiculous of the Chamouni rules. The process reminds one of an African picture, in which an elephant is assaulted with spears till his body presents the appearance of a porcupine, and he yields beneath the force of constantly irritating wounds.

Only one thing remained to complete our happiness before quitting Chamouni at the end of a week or ten days, which were spent in a succession of delightful excursions upon the glaciers and general defiance of the obnoxious rules. We wished to bid a fitting adieu to our chief enemy, M. Bossoney. With this object we walked one rainy morning into the Bureau des Guides, and found him in a circle of admiring friends. His gloomy countenance looked eminently surly as we greeted him in a cheery fashion, and told him that we understood it was the custom to present a certificate to those who had made the ascent of Mont Blanc from Chamouni.

"Non, messieurs," he replied; "on ne donne pas un certificat qu'à ceux qui ont fait l'ascension selon les règles."

We declared that we had seen a copy of the certificate in question, and knew that it must be given upon requisition to those who had gone up the mountain from Chamouni, though not to those who had ascended from another quarter. He was as obstinate as a mule; but the rain poured pitilessly, and we had plenty of time to dispute the point. We prevailed by reason of our importunity, and compelled him to give each of us a magnificent document which we shall keep to our dying day. It consists of half a sheet of large paper, crowned with a fancy picture of the top of the mountain, and a group of men in every conceivable attitude, shouting with delight. Bossoney was obliged to fix his own sign manual to a statement that we had made the ascent, and he gave it with an air expressive of his intense desire that it might poison us. With stately mockery, we wished him the compliments of the season, and retired from his august presence.

Think not that because a mountain has been previously ascended, perhaps full many a time, it thereby loses all its charm for the next comer. The first pioneer doubtless has a particular kind of pleasure which is all his own; but let us never forget the truth that "a thing of beauty is a joy forever." Try your muscles and bronze your face upon the snow-fields and precipices of Mont Blanc or Monte Rosa, and as years creep on you will not repent of your exertions. Those who have been among the glories of the High Alps will carry with them a fund of sunny memories which will serve to brighten up many a dull day and cheer their hearts as they warm ancient toes over a wintry fire.

*The Apostle of Kerry.* By the Rev. W. Graham Campbell. (Dublin, Moffat.)—This is the life of a certain Charles Graham, who spent some forty years in the latter part of the last century and in the beginning of this as a Methodist preacher in Kerry. We can gather from this book that he was an extraordinary man; he could hardly have been otherwise, to conduct a revival movement in the face both of the Established Church and of the Romanist priesthood. But he is very unfortunate in his biographer, who is wholly without discrimination or power of description. It is but a small thing, perhaps, but we should have liked to know what manner of man to look at Mr. Graham was; we can learn nothing except from an incidental notice that he was "too stiff" to be pulled down from

a tub on which he was preaching. A revivalist preacher in Kerry ought to be "stiff," we fancy. But there are many curious facts of one sort or another in the volume, if any one cares to dig them out. Among other things, we learn with some surprise that marriage is a bar to the regular ministry among the Methodists. There is also mention of another phenomenon which we presume to be uncommon, a *second* conversion, not in restoration, but in development of the first.—In the same connection we may mention a *Life of Lord Haddo*, by Alexander Duff, D. D. (Religious Tract Society), a remarkable instance of the occurrence of the same phenomena, to use a perfectly neutral word, of Methodism in a totally different sphere. Spectator.

## VIII.

THE tea-party was over — they were floating with the stream again, and travelling back at a rapid pace past the trim green rustic lawns at Wargrave towards Henley — past a desolate-looking island, where a barge was floating; past banks of wild roses, flowering and hanging in fanciful garlands; golden flags were springing, and lilies opening their chalices, and stars, white and violet, were studding the banks of this lovely summer-world. Then they left it all, and passed into a dark cavernous dungeon of waters, shut in by great wooden doors. Felicia was not yet used to locks, and she and little Lucy grasped each other's hands as the boat began sinking into the depths, sinking to the roar of the weir and the mill into slimy green profundities, hollowed and destroyed by the discoloured waters. The little rose-cottage where the keeper lived went right up into the air — so did his little children, who had rushed out to open the sluices.

Down they went to the very depths: the great green dripping walls were covered with slime and weeds; up above roses were flowering on the surface of the earth; down here the sunlight scarcely touched the gloom, and dank dripping mould and creeping vegetation. Little waterfalls burst through the rotten gates, and fell roaring and rushing into the dark waters.

"Oh, what a terrible place," said Felicia.

Miss Marlow gave a little shriek as the boat bumped suddenly against the side of the lock.

"Are you frightened?" said Baxter to Felicia.

"Yes," said Felicia; and then she looked up and smiled. "I mean no," she said, "not if you —" Then, seeing that James was looking at her, she stopped short.

Jim, who was standing up with the boat-hook in his hand, turned away; and, stooping over the edge of the boat, looked at something in the water. Perhaps a minute may have passed — it seemed a very long time to him. When he looked up again, Felicia was blushing still, the great gates were opening, the water was pouring through, and a glimpse of the sweet flowing river shone once more between the great portals; it all looked more lovely if possible from the gloom in which they had been waiting.

Then Jim and Baxter pushed with their long boat-hooks, and the boat began to slide out from the dark jaws in which it had

been enclosed. The gates creaked as they opened wide: the boat was almost between them, — when something happened. I cannot exactly tell how, a great barge that was waiting outside began to move, and struck against the gate. The lock-man had been called away, one of the two boys turning the pulley tripped and fell, the other boy's hand slipped; the windlass began to untwist rapidly, and the great gates to close fast upon the little boat.

"Pull! pull!" shouted Baxter, who was at the bow, to James, who had instinctively begun to back.

Their two contrary efforts delayed them for an instant; James, seeing the danger, with a great effort caught at the gate with the boat-hook, and, with the impetus from his whole body, urged the boat through. It was just in time, the boat was safe, the barge was stopped; but the boat-hook stuck in the wood, and before any one could help him, Jim was over and splashing in the water.

It was no very great matter: a punt close at hand came to his help, and the little boat's crew landed, and waited in the garden while the lock-keeper dried Jim's clothes. The man lent him some of his own while the others were drying, and Jim, coming out of the little rose-cottage in a fustian jacket, top-boots, and a fur cap, found Miss Flower sitting on a little green wooden bench under a rose-tree. He saw old Miss Marlow's broad back as she stood placidly, gazing at the river, and Aurelius and Felicia and little Lucy were wandering along the banks under the little row of willow-trees in the meadow, where the cows were crunching the buttercups. There was a bird singing somewhere, and a cricket chirping in the grass, and a sweet flood of peaceful light.

Miss Marlow turned round from her contemplation of the river, hearing Jim's voice. She came up and took his arm, and leaning heavily, proposed that they should follow the others.

"Come, Miss Flower, you are not doing your duty," said the old lady, "allowing your cousin to flirt as he does with engaged young ladies."

But Emily said naively, "No, thank you. I am tired, and I will wait for you here."

Felicia and Lucy had found great bunches of forget-me-nots growing down by the river. They were trying to tempt the cows to come and eat them.

It was about eight o'clock when they reached the station. Little Lucy was to go home immediately, and go to bed. She and Miss Flower had come up for a two-days' visit to a friend. Miss Marlow, like

an old goose, instead of saying good-bye, cordially invited Captain Baxter to come back to supper with them. Wouldn't Miss Flower come too, if they dropped little Lucy on their way? But again Miss Flower refused very decidedly.

"I think Mrs. X. expected you, Aurelius," she said.

"Then I will go with you," said Aurelius.

"Oh, Miss Flower, our last night!" cried Miss Marlow reproachfully.

And then poor Emily, who could not bear to seem grasping and unreasonable, said, blushing, that she could easily explain to Mrs. X., and she begged Aurelius to call a hansom for her and Lucy, and the two drove off to the house in Chesham Place, where they were staying. They were to go home the next morning. Felicia and her aunt went off together in a brougham which had been waiting, and reached Queen Square some little time before the two gentlemen arrived.

Felicia's first question was for her grandmother. The old butler said that Mrs. Marlow was in her room. She had been out that afternoon, and came home about four o'clock complaining of faintness. Felicia thought her looking ill, when she ran in in the glad way that girls burst in after a pleasant day.

"Are you ill, dear grandmother? We have had such a day," said the girl. "Oh dear me, why is it over? I wish you had been with us. Oh, I wish we were not going to-morrow. What has been the matter?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Marlow a little strangely. "I have been ill and out of spirits. I could not have stayed away longer from home, Felicia. I have suffered enough for your pleasure as it is."

Felicia flushed up. "My pleasure, dear grandmother; I don't have so very much."

"You never think of anything else," said Mrs. Marlow. "Girls are always thinking of their pleasure: they don't mind what pain they give others," the old lady went on, still in this strange excited way. "There is your grandfather alone; here am I quite ill and overdone. I shall be thankful when this marriage is over."

"You need not tell me that," cried the girl, indignant. "I know it."

"When a thing is settled and determined, the sooner it is done with the better," said Mrs. Marlow.

Fay's heart began to beat.

"Determined and settled, grandmamma!" she cried. "I think it is cruel the way in which you and grandpapa talk: you

have settled everything for us, and it is cruel — yes, cruel! I can do nothing, and no one will help me, and you care for nothing, so long as grandpapa has his own selfish way," said the girl.

"Hush!" said Mrs. Marlow, white and angry. "This is not the way for you to speak of your grandfather. I am shocked at your impertinence."

The poor lady was ill, nervous, thoroughly unstrung, almost for the first time since Felicia had known her. She had never before taken any of the girl's outbursts seriously. Fay, too, was excited, unreasonable. The idea of breaking off had never occurred to her till that day; she was in an agitated state of mind, easily impressionable, upset.

It all happened in a moment. Miss Marlow had barely time to pant up-stairs to find the two in high controversy — Felicia in tears, Mrs. Marlow flushed and agitated.

"What is the matter? My dear Eliza, I am sorry to hear of your indisposition. Fay, go and get ready for dinner," cried Miss Marlow.

It would have been better, far better for Felicia, if they had ended their little quarrel; fought it out, and made it up with tears. As it was, Miss Marlow separated them, and when the gong sounded Felicia, still indignant, came into her grandmother's room.

"I am going down, grandmamma; are you ready?"

The old lady was busy packing in the hair-box.

"I am coming," said Mrs. Marlow, without looking up. "You had better go, Felicia; I will follow. Pray remember never again to speak to me of your grandfather as you did just now."

She spoke so coldly, that once more Felicia felt a thrill of injured indignation; and she swept down-stairs with a heart aching sorely, notwithstanding all the pleasures of the day.

## IX.

It was in the evening. They had all finished dinner. Mrs. Marlow had gone up again to see to her packing; Miss Marlow had got up from table and come away into the after-dinner drawing-room, holding Felicia's hand in hers — Baxter (Miss Marlow, as I have said, had insisted on his coming. I cannot imagine how a woman of her sentimental experience can have been so silly. Is it possible that a thought of thwarting her brother may have added a little malice to her hospitality?) Baxter, who had come back at the old lady's re-

quest to say good-bye, was sitting with James in the dining-room. The great windows were wide open upon the balcony, and the dusky park gloomed without, at once hot and cool and mysterious. Felicia, who had scarcely spoken all dinner-time, who was angry still, was summoning up her courage to speak now — to say what was in her heart — to implore Miss Marlow to help her. She loved Jim dearly. Some day, years and years hence, she would marry him if he wished it; but now, ah, no! it was impossible. She fell down upon her knees by her aunt's low chair, then for a minute was silent, looking out across the grey evening, watching the distant lights, the bright stars shining clear in the faint summer sky. She thought of the river flowing on — of Jim and his faithful kindness, with more affection and remorse, I think, at this minute, than in all her life before; and then suddenly she burst out, in her childish, plaintive voice, seizing Miss Marlow's hand tight in her two eager little palms — "Oh, tell me what is to happen — what is to happen! Oh, aunt Mary Anne, what shall I do?"

Aunt Mary Anne was a coward at heart. She turned round and stared at the imploring face upturned to her; she had not realized the edged tools with which she had been playing when she brought two impulsive young people together. There had been, as I have said, a little quiet spite in her doings; a little selfishness, for she liked the captain's company; a little common-sense and goodwill and feeling that Felicia should see some other man in all the world besides Jim, before she retired with him for ever to the solitudes of Harpington. But Miss Marlow had judged by her own vague and manifold sentimental experiences. Felicia's strange looks that afternoon, her sudden cry of pain, frightened the elder lady.

Miss Marlow felt for a moment afraid of poor eager Felicia, and started up all flustered. "Do just what you like, my dear," said the old lady, very nervously. "Nobody can force you to do anything you don't like. I—I must go and see how your grandmother is getting on." And so saying the old maid trotted out of the room.

She was gone in a minute, and poor Fay was left frightened and disappointed, — bitterly, bitterly disappointed. "What was the good of being old, of having lived all those years, if she had no help, no kind word to spare for a poor little thing in trouble?" thought Felicia. But there was something wild and self-reliant about the girl, that would not be daunted: she set her teeth. "I will make her hear me," she said to her-

self: she would speak again when this evening was over, when Aurelius was gone, and the last happy hour of her life ended for ever. Presently, sitting there still, she found that Baxter had come in and was talking to her; she had hardly noticed him at first, so busy was she thinking about him. She jumped up a little confused, and went out upon the terrace. "James is gone off for a smoke," the captain was saying, as he followed her out on the terrace. "There he is under the trees." Felicia looked and saw that it was not James, but she did not speak.

A sort of sleepy apathy had come over Felicia after her day's excitement. She did not care what happened just at that minute. It was like one of her visions to be sitting there with Baxter, to hear him speak — to listen to his voice in the dusk. What was he saying? He had been praising Jim for the last five minutes. He felt as if by praising the poor boy he made amends somehow for the unowned treachery in his heart against him.

It was some such feeling which irritated Felicia; she was not going to sham and pretend what she did not feel. In all her life this faculty had been hers of speaking the truth boldly. Some people have loved her for it; others have hated her. All this day the poor child had been driven to the very utmost end of her powers by inward assaults, and doubts, and terrors, born of the very excitements and happiness of the last few days. When Baxter spoke, she said quickly that "it was not Jim's goodness she cared about, and yet he was a hundred times too good for her."

"Too good for you!" Baxter said, speaking his thought inadvertently. "Ask him. He does not think so: why, it would break his heart to part from you."

"Do you think so?" cried Felicia, desperate. "Do you think people mind very much when these sort of things are broken off? Don't you see how unhappy I am?" she went on.

Was she false to Jim, poor child, in being true? She trusted Baxter so utterly; she was so young, she felt so convinced that she might trust him; she had begun the talk just now with her aunt — it was but going on with it now, leaning forward with her piteous little face upturned, and waiting for an answer. But no answer came; no one would help her. Baxter was too loyal to want her confidence.

"Come and let us talk to Miss Marlow," he said, very gravely; "she will want you to come in."

"No one — no one will help me!" cried

Felicia, desperately. "She won't help me. You won't listen to me, you won't help me," she said, as he turned to go; it was all over, there was no hope anywhere.

"Poor child!" he said.

"Are you sorry for me?" said Felicia, simply. "Then I don't mind so much."

"Sorry!" cried poor Baxter, at an end of his courage. "Don't you see how it is, Felicia—that I am trying to be an honest man?"

"Oh, what am I to do? Tell me what I ought to do!" said Felicia, breaking into tears.

Poor little thing! Her heart beat, her tears flowed. She trembled so she could not stand, and she put out her hands wildly to grasp some support. She had no strong sense of duty. When had she ever seen duty practised in that dreary, self-seeking household? She did not love Jim as she loved Aurelius. She could not understand that, loving and trusting him, she should not appeal to him.

"Oh, help me!" she said, once more, wringing her hands. "Oh, I cannot, cannot go back."

You blame him, and so do I, that he was weak; that he did not turn away and leave her; that he caught her two poor little outstretched hands.

"Oh, Felicia," he said again, "do you think it is you only who are unhappy? Don't you see that I—that some debts are almost more than we can pay?"

And then he stopped short. What was he saying? What could he say or do that was not a treachery to his friend? And yet these two loved each other; and was it fair that their whole love and life should be marred so that one person should be made half happy, half content? Only, somehow, Aurelius could not reason thus.

Poor Aurelius! If Felicia had been older, different, more able to decide; but, as it was, he felt that it was for him to take a part. Felicia, heaven bless her! was ready to give up her faith, her word, if he had desired it. He had dropped her two hands. She stood crying still, and leaning against a chair.

"I will do what you think I ought," she said.

It was at that minute that a light from the room fell upon the two, and that some one came and stood in the window,—some one with a pale face, who did not speak for a minute; then Miss Marlow, following quick and bustling out—

"Why, James, where have you been?" she said. "I have been looking for you. There is a telegram for you. Dear me, it

is getting quite chilly, and they have not brought the tea. Would you ring, Captain Baxter?"

"I am afraid I must be going," said Baxter, in a steady voice. No one would have guessed from his voice that anything unusual had happened, though his face might have told the story, had the light been upon it. He nodded to James, shook hands with Miss Marlow. Felicia never moved or looked up, nor did he look at her again. Aurelius went down the stairs and passed out by the narrow iron wicket into the Park, and then all his strength left him. He went and leant against the railings, resting his arm upon the iron, and covering his eyes with his hand. Shut eyes or open, he saw that trembling, wildly-appealing face. It was no use,—it was in vain he had known Felicia. He would do his duty, heaven help them both. His part was clear for the present; he must go, and see Felicia no more.

When Aurelius had said good-night to James, the young man had scarcely responded. Baxter did not know how long he had been standing in the window or how much he had heard of what had passed. Aurelius, sorry as he was, vexed, troubled, unhappy, could not but feel that he had acted as an honest man as far as James was concerned. Towards poor little Felicia his conduct had been less praiseworthy. Leaving her, he felt like a traitor, poor fellow; and yet what could he do but leave her? What he felt when he began—where it was all to end, Aurelius could not tell himself. He was a man not greatly given to self-dissection and examination. His life had been too active for more than a sort of *four le jour* consciousness. He knew that, on the whole he hoped to do his duty as a gentleman and a soldier: to wrong no man or woman, to speak the truth, to take a fair advantage of the enemy when he saw a chance. For all his thirty-five years there was a certain boyish rigidity about him; and having said that black was blue, or discovered that he intended to leap a five-barred gate, or be in such a place by such a day, black was blue in his eyes, he leaped the gate, he went through any inconvenience to keep his word. I do not know that there is any particular advantage in playing this sort of game of skill with fate and inclination. But it is a way some people have, and they are honest people for the most part.

Aurelius, contrary to his wont, had allowed himself to drift a little along the stream in the pleasant company he had been keeping of late. Now he stopped



short, and as he stood for a minute by the iron railing, he made up his mind. No; he would not go any more to the house. He would not say good-by to Felicia. He would not meddle in the business. He could not help it if the girl was to be sacrificed. She was not the first or the last woman to make a mistaken marriage, and it was no affair of his. So Baxter walked away angry through the twilight of the summer's night, quick, straight, rigid, disappearing rapidly into the gloom. As he went along he saw Felicia's sad eyes appealing everywhere, through the glimmering twigs on the trees, shining from the stars, and once in the gas-lit windows of a shop-front. He did not care, he hardened himself and walked on quicker. Poor Aurelius! he thought it was a shame to leave her. He told himself again that it was a crime that two people should be sacrificed for so little cause. He knew James well enough—that scrupulous soul—to be sure that a word would set his conscience swaying and whirling, and secure Felicia's liberty. He knew all this, he knew it would be right. He felt that he was acting wrongly and cruelly, and inflicting unnecessary pain; and yet, somehow, right as it might be, he (Baxter) was determined that the deed should not be of his doing. He should not be the one to hand his friend the weapon with which to destroy his happiness, nor to suggest to Felicia the possibility of inflicting upon her lover a deadly wound. And so he walked away with brisk steps farther and farther from the dim balcony where the passionate cry had so nearly touched him, where the poor, pale, trembling little creature was still crouching in the dark.

Poor little Felicia! Baxter was gone, and the child, shrinking out of sight, went and sat down upon one of the low window-steps. James went to find his telegram. The tea-tray was brought up. Miss Marlow came and called her, and went away. Fay gave no answer. She only wanted to be alone—to be left to hide herself there in the grey darkness and melancholy of the night. There was a black corner behind a little laurel-tree in a box. Felicia—poor little Daphne that she was—longed to creep into the narrow dark corner and stay there. Never come out again, never hear her own voice speak again, never ask people for help and be refused any more. No one helped—no one cared for her. She covered her face with her hands at the thought—abandoned and despised. Ah! if she could only be nowhere; but wherever she was she cumbered the earth, thought poor little Fay in her despair. Would

there be vast groves of laurel, I sometimes wonder, if men and women possessed the power of changing themselves at will into inanimate trees in moments of shame and indecision? What a terrible boon it would be to humanity! One can imagine the fatal wish granted in a moment of excitement. One can imagine leaves springing from the slender finger-ends, the wreath of laurel creeping round their heads, the narrow choking bark enclosing them in its rapid growth. And then the faint aromatic breath of the prussic acid, and then the wind shivering among human leaves. Poor Fay would have wildly grasped at the power if it had been hers at the minute; but now-a-days, little girls can only cry and sit with their faces hidden in their hands, when they are in trouble, instead of becoming stars and streams and plants. She had spoken in an impulse, and now that the impulse was over, what would she not give to have been silent—her life, her right hand, anything, everything. So the night wore on, the black leaves rustled close to her shining head, London was rolling itself to sleep and quiet by degrees.

Felicia at last hearing some clock strike eleven across the house-tops, pulled herself wearily up, and came out of her hiding. Very pale she looked, with a black smudge upon her white muslin dress, and wild, sad eyes, with great pupils. She could not see, coming into the dazzle of the drawing-room lamps, but she heard voices calling her, "Felicia, Felicia!" They seemed to be everywhere; and then James, who had just come into the room, rushed up to her. "Oh, Felicia," he said, "I have been looking for you. Go—go to grandmother—there is terrible news from home. . . ."

While Felicia has been absorbed in her own griefs and pre-occupations the great laws of life and death and fate had not been suspended, and the news had come that the Squire was dead.

He had been seized with some fatal attack in a field, and carried to a cottage close by, where he died.

### X.

JAMES and Felicia never forgot that terrible night. When the morning came, her despair of a few hours before seemed like a remembrance of some old tune played out, and come to an end abruptly in the midst of its most passionate cadence. The tunes of life stop short in the middle, and that is the most curious part of life's history. Another music sounds, mighty, sudden, and unexpected, and we leave off our song

to listen to it, and when it is over some of us have forgotten the song we were singing. Perhaps in another world it may come to us again.

This death-music was now sounding through the old house in Queen Square. The poor grandmother lay crushed and stunned by its awful thunder; the old aunt, to whom it was familiar enough, came and went with a troubled and yet accustomed face.

"You had better not go to your grandmother, child," she said to Fay; "she is best alone."

Fay appealed to Jim, who looked distressed and took her hand in his, and said they would go together when aunt Mary Anne was below.

And so about midnight there was an opportunity, and the two went up-stairs together. The unshuttered windows let in the gleam of a starry sky, for the vapours had drifted away. They came along the passage to the door of the dim front bedroom, where Felicia had left her angry grandmother a little while before, and where she was now lying stricken, cold, and motionless, and stretched her full length upon the great bed. There was a dim night-light in the room, and they seemed to feel the hard stony grief as they came in; to meet it, — a presence with a vague intangible form. Felicia with a beating heart, stood by the bedside. Mrs. Marlow neither moved nor spoke. At last the girl knelt down, and softly and imploringly kissed the old brown hand. It was moved away. "Grandmamma, dear grandmamma!" sobbed Felicia; but her grandmother, in an odd, harsh, hissing voice said, "Is James there?" and when he came said, still in this quick strange way, "I want to be alone, James. Take her away."

Poor little Fay she was trembling like a little aspen, and as she got up from her knees she held to the chair by the bedside. She was hurt and wounded almost beyond bearing. She put her hand to her heart: "Oh, grandmamma," she faltered, "I who love you so" —

But Mrs. Marlow never moved, or looked, or answered, and James putting his arm round Felicia, brought her away gently and closed the door. Once outside in the passage, Felicia cried and cried as if her heart would break. Miss Marlow came up-stairs, and finding Fay there, tried to comfort her.

"You should not have gone in when I told you not. She is not quite in her right mind, dear," said the old lady; "and people in this state often turn against those they love best. You must be good and

patient, and James shall come and fetch you. I think — Jim, don't you think Fay had better stay here and pack up? and then you can come back and fetch her to-morrow."

And poor Fay meekly assented, crying still, and utterly crushed and worn out. But she would not go to bed: nobody went to bed that night. There was an early morning train at five o'clock, by which the travellers were to go. A conveyance had to be found, preparations had to be made, packing done, and notes written. Felicia fluttered about, trying to help, utterly weary. Then at last she lay down, about two o'clock, on the golden sofa in the drawing-room, and slept till a cab driving up through the silence awoke her. She knew it was the cab which had come to take the others away, and she jumped up from the sofa, and went out: she was afraid to go to Mrs. Marlow's room.

As Felicia stood on the stairs waiting to see them off, her grandmother passed her without a word or a look. The women came down together, followed by James, with bundles and cloaks upon his arm. Miss Marlow stopped to kiss her and bid her go to bed and try to sleep. Jim said with his kind face that he would come back; and they were gone, haggard mourners, in the light of the still broad clear early morning. The cab-wheels rolled and echoed through the silent streets. Fay stood bewildered, listening to it, but presently a kind housemaid came and begged her to come to bed and helped Felicia to undress, and brought her a cup of tea, and sat by her bedside till she fell asleep.

When Felicia awoke it was ten o'clock, and a misty morning sun was streaming into the room. The housemaid had been opening and shutting the door and peeping in many times, and she now appeared to ask Miss Marlow if she would come down to breakfast, or if the butler should clear it away.

Felicia said she would come down, and dressed in a hurry and ran down-stairs, with an undefined impression of a scolding from some one. But there was no scolding: only the teapot, *The Times* all to herself, a little dish of cold buttered toast, a new pot of strawberry-jam sent up by the sympathizing housekeeper. Felicia liked the jam, but she had no great appetite, and presently she forgot to eat, and was looking at her own reflection in the teapot, and then conjuring up one last scene at home after another, and picturing the sad home-coming.

There was her grandfather standing be-

fore her, as she had seen him that last time, stooping to button the leather-apron of the gig. She seemed to see him riding off on the white horse, with his grey wideawake pulled tight over his grey head; coming home, and riding into the stables, or walking into the morning-room where she and her grandmother were sitting: then she saw him sitting under the tree that sunshiny day busy over his accounts. Poor grandfather! he had mended her wheelbarrow for her when she was a little girl; and one delightful day she remembered he had taken her in the gig to a farmhouse, and given her a cup of milk with his own hands. A crowd of thoughts and remembrances came, and were driven away by a crowd of fancies of what was now, of Harpington all gloomy and shut up. Felicia was so frightened at last that she rang the bell for old Saunders to clear away (Saunders was a portly and prosperous old butler, very different from the poor drudge at Harpington). Saunders stopped a long time, but at last Felicia saw him carry off the last plate and knife, and then she found herself alone once more with the bare dining-room table before her: the mahogany sideboard, the mahogany wine-cases, and the print of Queen Adelaide over the chimney. She tried the drawing-room for a change. When animate things are away, inanimate things certainly seem to attain a strange life and importance of their own. All the gold tables and sofas seemed to spread themselves out to receive her. Felicia sank down in a corner of the sofa, and took the first book that came to her hand; but somehow she could only see the legs of the chairs and the tables, the stuffed birds, and the bust of Miss Marlow in her youth, nodding. When she had tried to read for ten minutes, she thought she had been sitting there for hours and hours, with Rogers' *Italy* open before her, and the prints of the mountains, and the reflection of the little boat sailing in the finely-etched lake. Was that horrible little boat never going to reach the shore? Felicia shut up the book and threw it down on the cushion beside her. She was accustomed to being alone; but alone was different at home, where she knew every corner of the house, with the garden, and the farm, and the village children to play with. This was hateful. How could Miss Marlow bear it, so strange and still, crowded with chairs and tables? Felicia did not feel that she might run from the top of the house to the bottom, dive into outhouses and cupboards, — explore, investigate: here to gaze through glass-doors at the shells and Japanese gods, and through glass-windows at the silent old

house opposite in Queen Square, was all that she dared to do. Felicia had taken a horror of the balcony since last night. She went into the passage, and looked for a long while at the old brown house opposite, with the dim slit windows, the statue of Queen Anne standing calm in all her ruffles and frills. It must be very dull to be a statue, Felicia thought. She wandered up to her own room, but the grandmother's door was open, and through that open door came a troop of sad hobgoblins: all the grandmother's stern looks, all the miseries of the night before, coming with a rush, and surrounding her.

Felicia fled into the passage again. She looked at the pasteboard effigy, painted and glazed, of the little page in a corner. In one of the glass cupboards on the stairs was a plate which put her in mind of the old dish at Harpington. There was the garland and the scroll-work. Everything was the same, but the clasped hands were missing. Sola was written on the scroll. It looked like *alone*, Felicia thought, flourishing away there all by itself. What a horrid thing it was to be alone. She made up a little story of some Portia asking her knights to choose off which of the two plates they would dine; and one knight said, — "I will dine alone, lady, for I have a good appetite, and don't care to share my meal." And the other knight said he would never touch food again unless one only lady would consent to break bread with him. And then Felicia began to wonder what the lady would say, suppose she liked the greedy knight best. That was a difficult question to answer, and as she was debating it she heard a ring at the bell, and she leant over the banisters to see who it could be.

One of her two knights was at that minute standing outside the door, and she knew his voice when he asked if Miss Marlow was at home, and if Mrs. Marlow was gone back to Harpington.

Then Saunders began a long long story, and when finally he made way for Captain Baxter to come into the hall, it seemed to Felicia that it was like the stream of life rushing into the hushed house again, and that her boat was rising upon the rising waters; but she started away as usual, and ran and hid herself in the little dressing-room out of Miss Marlow's bedroom, where, after a long search, the housemaid found her.

#### XI.

MEANWHILE poor Baxter was waiting in the dining-room and looking forward with some perturbation to his interview. He

had had two lines from James that morning begging him to call in Queen Square, and telling him what had happened. "If I cannot get back to-morrow, I am going to ask you to bring Felicia to us," James wrote. Aurelius confounded James's stupidity. Why was Felicia left behind? Why was he, of all people in the world, chosen to escort her to Harpington?

Baxter could not pretend to any great personal regret for the old Squire, but for the poor widow he felt a great compassion, and as for Felicia, well, it would delay her marriage, poor little thing, and so far at least she would be the gainer. It was not in human nature not to be glad of the excuse to see her again, although all the way Aurelius railed at his friend in his heart, and said to himself he deserved his fate for his dulness and want of comprehension.

Was Jim so dull? He knew Baxter better than Baxter knew himself, and by the light of his own honest heart he judged his friend. Baxter need not have been afraid of the meeting. The long, sad night had come like a year between Fay and the indignant tears she had shed for herself the night before. They were wiped out. Baxter's first word brought other tears into her eyes, tears of regret and of feeling for others. Felicia was a whole year older in experience than she had been when he last saw her. As she came into the room with half-flashing eyes, Baxter felt ashamed of his alarms, and met her quite humbly, saying something about the shock they had had, and his note from James. "I came to see if I could do anything for you," he said.

Felicia shook her head and sat down listlessly in the big chair by the empty fireplace.

"I am alone here," she answered, looking away. "There is nothing wanted. Poor grandmamma went away at five o'clock this morning. She could not bear to have me with her, and so they left me here to wait. I want nothing, thank you."

"Poor child," Aurelius said. He was more sorry for Felicia, left alone for a day with these gloomy fancies, than for the whole life-agony of the widowed woman who had left her there. He was, poor fellow, in a state of indescribable pity, vexation, despair, that he could do nothing to help this poor little stricken creature. This time it was not Felicia who appealed to him; it was Baxter appealing to Felicia. "I wish you would let me do something for you," he said. Something in his kind looks roused the girl's indignation. It was too late; she did not want his kindness now. For Felicia was used to be adored, and to

command poor Jim, and to speak her mind plainly enough. Her almost childish admiration and confidence in Baxter had received a shock. She had discovered that their friendship meant very little after all; that to count upon people outside is of little use in home affairs. To think of her own feelings seemed a sort of sacrilege now at this time. Last night, when she asked him to help her, he left her; to-day, when she did not want him, he came with offers of help that meant nothing at all. There was a certain combativeness, a certain determination in Felicia's character—a horror of ridicule, a want of breadth and patience of nature, all of which feelings kindling suddenly brought a bright flush of angry colour into her pale cheeks. "Jim will be here before long," she said. "He will take care of me. Now I want nothing from any one else."

"Good-by," said Aurelius, quite humbly. "Please remember, however, that if you want me ever at any time anywhere I will come." He spoke so humbly that it was impossible to be angry. Felicia looked at him steadily with her curious grey eyes; her mouth quivered, the colour died out of her cheeks.

Felicia's heart began to sink as soon as Baxter left the room. She sat quite still, and the minutes became hours again, and time seemed interminable, and release so far, far off, that it seemed to this impatient little creature as if in one instant she had waited for an eternity—an eternity with James at the end of it! Felicia had said good-by, the door was closed, the parting was over, time had passed, and now, with a very simple impulse, she sprang up and ran out into the hall. Aurelius was still there, turning at the many complicated locks and handles and chain-works that Miss Marlow considered necessary to her security and old Saunder's. They had done Felicia good service on this occasion.

Baxter turned, hearing his name called, and saw Fay in the doorway. "Will you do me a kindness now, directly?" she said impetuously. "Will you take me home? I want to go. I can't bear to stay here any longer."

"Had not you better wait till you hear from Jim?" said Baxter, coming back, and not much surprised. "I am ready at any time, but he may be on his way."

"He will not come till to-morrow," said Felicia, sharply. "Will you do this for me or not? Please do," said the girl. "I do so want to get away. They must want me; they can't be so cruel as not to want me. Don't you think so?"

"They only want to spare you," said Baxter, who could not resist her any longer. "Will you like to go by the five-o'clock train?"

"Yes," said Felicia, eagerly. "Is that the soonest? Please come and fetch me?" And Baxter said he would come, and then went to put off half-a-dozen engagements. He thought the girl would be better in a home, however sad, than vexing and chafing in the solitudes of Queen Square.

And so it happened that Felicia came back to Harpington. She and Baxter scarcely spoke to each other all the four hours they were on the road. He had come to take care of her, and not to make himself agreeable; and he conscientiously read the paper in a corner of the railway-carriage. Fay looked at him once or twice, surprised at first by his silence, and then she watched the fields flit by, the telegraph-posts, the cows, the cottages with their smoking chimneys and all their inhabitants; and so they sped along from one county to another: here and there came a shining hamlet, now a gig passing a bridge, now a woman carrying a bundle. Felicia tried to follow some people with her mind, but another cow, another gig, another tree-stump would come and drive out the remembrance of the last. Fay, as I have said, had almost put away the remembrance of the night before. She had thought she would never be able to look at Baxter again, to speak to him, but now she felt that they might be friends once more. He was changed, but Felicia was too full of her own thoughts to perceive this. What a strange procession of new feelings and realizations was passing for the first time through the girl's mind — visions of home — visions of London delights — visions of the sorrowful, terrible present, and of the future of marriage, of loneliness.

What was this voice still saying, "Sola, Sola?" only now Felicia asked herself if Sola did not mean Alone perhaps? — nothing else. If Baxter was changed and silent, Felicia too was changed and silenced; and they were not quite the same people they had been the night before. There were some other people in the carriage who did not find out the two were travelling together. One old gentleman, interested by the pair of innocent, penetrating grey eyes that he caught scanning him, asked the young lady if she was travelling alone, and if there was anything he could do for her. Then for the first time Baxter looked up from his paper, and said in his blackest stiffest manner that the lady was under his care.

It was nearly nine o'clock when they got to the station. Baxter had telegraphed from London, and he expected to find Jim upon the platform; but there was no Jim, no sign, and the only thing to do was to walk to the inn and order a fly. They waited under the rose-grown porch in the twilight. Everything seemed sweet, and still, and peaceful. A gardener belonging to the inn was pumping water for the pretty, old garden flowers — lilies, and lupins, and marigolds, and white honeysuckles; the sky was sweet with sunset, and the air with perfume. A couple of dusky figures stood in the middle of the street talking quietly; an old woman came to the door of her cottage. This purple dusk was making everything beautiful, and how fragrant the air was after the vapid London breath they had been living in!

They had a long, sweet, silent drive across the fields, and between dim horizons and wooded fringes. The evening star came and shone over the twilight silver and purple world before they got to their journey's end. Baxter was silently happy, and so was Felicia, who, for a mile or two, had almost forgotten the sorrow to which she was travelling, in the peace and sweetness of the journey. But when the house appeared above the hedge at the turn of the road, her heart began to beat and everything came back to her.

"The gates are closed," said the girl, startled, as they passed the front of the house.

The gates were closed for the first time since Felicia could remember, and the ivy and wild creepers had been crushed and torn in the process.

This one little incident, perhaps, brought all that happened more vividly to Felicia's mind than anything else that had gone before. They stopped at the back door, the front gate being locked, and Aurelius desired the fly-man to wait, and came with Felicia to see her safe into the house before he drove away. They crossed the stable-yard and the end of the garden, and so reached the terrace along which the windows, closed and black, were gleaming. And now suddenly came a cruel minute for Felicia, in which all the pain of parting, all the sadness into which she was going, all the gloom of that great closed house and of her hopeless future, seemed realized and concentrated. Baxter, too, looked up at the gloomy house into which little Fay was about to disappear: there it stood, closed and black, and he thought of the poor raving widowed heart aching within, and with remorse he thought of the little white victim standing beside him.



"Good-by," he said, putting out his hand quickly.

"Oh, I am frightened," said Felicia, not taking it, not looking, and trembling and standing irresolute. "Oh, what shall I do?"

"There is nothing to be afraid of," said Baxter, kindly. "I have seen a great many people die. It is a much more peaceful process than living. I don't think you need be afraid." Felicia sighed, but did not answer.

"Look, is not that study window open?" Baxter asked.

"Yes, but there is a table, and I could not go in there alone," said the girl, as with a shaking hand she tried to unfasten the door. "Don't go yet, please don't go," she said.

"I will wait here as long as you like," said Baxter. "Perhaps James will see me for a minute. You can send me word."

"Yes," said Felicia. She had got the door open at last. "I will tell you—please wait, don't leave me yet. I will come back to you." She spoke in a shrill, nervous voice, and the words travelling through the silence, woke up James, who had fallen asleep on the study sofa, utterly worn out and tired after his journey, his sleepless day and night of agitation and excitement. Had he dreamed them? had he heard them? He did not know—he started from his sleep, from a vague dream of Baxter and Felicia in the garden outside. He sat up and listened,—"Don't leave me yet! I will come back to you!" He heard her voice plainly ringing in his ears,—was it to him she was speaking? Was it Felicia come to make him well and happy by her presence? or was it Felicia speaking to some one else? Felicia false, Felicia lost to him for ever!

## XII.

POOR Jim! while they were going down into the lock the day before, he had made up his mind and told himself that cost what it might he must give up his darling desire. Felicia was not for such as him. She was too bright and brilliant a creature to mate with any but her own kind. Little Jim was a hero in his way. His whole life had been a forlorn hope.

He had made up his mind, but in this feverish dream, from which he was waking, he had forgotten his calmer self-decision and courage—only the natural pain was there, the jealousy, the humiliation, and heart-burning. Aurelius' telegram had come, and he had meant to go and meet them, but as he was waiting, turning over

papers in the study, till the time should come to start, he had fallen asleep. Miss Marlow was up-stairs with her sister-in-law; the whole house was silent, and no one had come near the study, and Jim for the last hour or two had been lying in a fever, dreaming uneasy dreams, and moaning in the deserted room. And now when he started wide awake from his sleep, he was wide awake, but dreaming still in a sort of way, forgetting all his waking resolutions, remembering only the fancies that had haunted his sleep. Felicia, outside with Baxter! Ah false! ah faithless! As the door opened, and she came in, Jim had groped his way to the table, and struck a light.

"I knew you were there," he said, as she came in, turning his haggard face to greet her. "Oh, Felicia, I was dreaming. Are you going to leave me, tell me? How could I bear it? How can I bear it? It will kill me. I have little enough life; you will take it all if you go."

He looked so strange and excited that his cousin was frightened.

"Going, Jim? What do you mean?"

"I heard you say so to some one outside," he went on, in his strange agitation.

"Dear Jim, said Felicia, trembling still, "be quiet. Hush! pray hush! See, lie down here. I—I won't leave you," and a faint glow came into her pale cheeks. "Lie still. Don't be afraid. You have had some nightmare," faltered the girl, knowing full well that it had been no nightmare, but her own words, which he had overheard.

"I thought I heard you say you were going," Jim said, still half distraught.

"It was a dream then—I had fallen asleep. Oh, thank heaven! Oh, my Felicia!"

She soothed him, she quieted him, in a hundred ways, and all the while her heart smote her. She was ashamed to meet his honest upturned loving glance.

"Poor boy," said Felicia, passing her cool hand across his forehead. "Lie still, dear," she said. "I am going for one minute. I shall come back to you."

He sprang up with a frightened sort of cry.

"Ah! now I know it was true," he said. "Felicia, Felicia! You are going. I shall wait and wait, and you will never come back."

"I swear I will come back," said Felicia, earnestly, fixing her great grey eyes upon her cousin.

And, a minute after, as Baxter stood waiting, listening to the voices, Felicia appeared for one moment in the darkness of

the doorway. "Good-night, good-by, and thank you," she said. "I am not afraid any more," and she was gone. Baxter went and dismissed the fly, and walked across the common to the cottage, where his little girl was asleep, and his old aunt and Emily Flower were quietly reading by the lamplight.

As for Felicia, when she went back she found James almost himself again, calm and different, and with his own natural expression.

"Did Baxter come back with you?" he asked. "Have you sent him away? It was a pity," he said. "A pity, a pity," he repeated, thinking, poor fellow, of himself as he spoke. "Dear," he said, "I think I was half asleep just now. I don't know what nonsense I talked. Forgive me."

"You were quite tired and worn out," said Felicia. "You must go to bed, Jim, directly. I suppose I may go to grand-mamma?" But James begged her to wait, and he went and found Miss Marlow, and then he went to bed as he was bid.

Miss Marlow told Felicia a long long history of their coming home. The old lady was very gentle, and cried a little, and she came with the girl to her own little room, past the door of the state apartment where the poor old grandfather was lying. And Fay came and went, seeing it all with her startled grey eyes. Aurelius was gone, but she did not mind. When everybody else was so unhappy, Felicia accepted her own share with more resignation. Her grandmother would not see her—that was the thing which troubled her most. Jim was very ill—that was evident—and thoroughly overdone; she must do what she could to help him. And then, utterly wearied out, Felicia fell fast asleep, with all the trouble and doubt round about her, and the darkness and gloom of the night, and dreamt the hours peacefully away till the morning light came to awaken her.

### XIII.

Two days more, and the closed gates were opened to let the old Squire's funeral pass through, travelling down the periwinkle walk, and followed by the steps of a few old neighbours. Baxter came to the churchyard, but did not come back to the house; and then the blinds were drawn up, and the business of life began once more; only Mrs. Marlow remained still in her room, and scarcely ever came down. The lawyers came to read the will. It was dated many years back. The house and the chief part of the estate had been left to Jim's father, and now consequently fell to

the share of the young man himself. There was a jointure settled upon Mrs. Marlow, which, (under a stringent clause) she was to forfeit if she married again. Felicia was to have a hundred a year. Another will had been prepared, but never signed; it was much to the same effect as the first, only that the jointure was increased and more in proportion to the bulk of the old man's property. He had left nearly 6,000*l.* a year behind him, and Jim, who never until now possessed a spare sovereign to do as he liked with, had money in stocks and land, and cheque-books, and credit without stint. . . .

James was closeted all day with different people, lawyers, and agents, and tenants; and one day a doctor came over from the neighbouring town and Jim declared next day that he had business in London. Little Lucy, who happened to meet Felicia that day, told her her papa had gone to town with Mr. Marlow.

James came back, and Felicia tried to think that he was the same, but she felt a difference. He was a little abstracted and thoughtful, but then he was very much occupied. He declared nothing was the matter, but she thought him very ill. He was busy arranging, docketing, putting away. People came and went; Felicia scarcely spoke to him. She dined with him (Felicia was surprised to see that Jim could carve, and Scruby opened his eyes in amazement when the young master of the house sent him down into the cellar for some wine), but immediately after dinner James would go away into the study.

Aunt Mary Anne found it very dull, and packed up at the end of a week and went off to Cheltenham, Queen Square being fortunately let.

The day Miss Marlow left, Felicia begged her grandmother timidly to let her be with her a little more.

"No, no," said Mrs. Marlow, with a little shiver. "Pray don't ask it; go—you agitate me."

So Felicia went away, pained and forlorn, flitting about with a feeling of disgrace, and the strange uneasy sense of some tamed animal that has lost its master and is suddenly set free.

One day—it was a little thing, but she took it foolishly to heart—her crystal bracelet, that she liked to wear, came unclasped and fell off her arm. She went roaming about a whole morning looking for it in the empty rabbit-house, in the kitchen-garden, on the terrace walk.

James, coming out of the study—where he had been closeted all the morning—for

a little turn on the terrace, was struck by Felicia's scared, wibegone face.

She had been sitting on the step for half-an-hour in the sun.

"Fay, what is the matter?" said Marlow, in his old familiar voice, as he came up to her.

"Nothing," said Felicia, looking up.

Nothing! That was just the answer to his question. Nothing to hope, to fear, to love, to try for. She did not think that James loved her now: she knew her grandmother had taken a strange hatred and aversion to her presence.

"Nothing?" said James, looking gravely at her troubled face.

"I have lost my pretty bracelet," said Felicia; "but that is nothing of course. And everything is horrid, but it does not matter."

"But is everything horrid?" said James, sighing.

"Don't other girls have a happier life than me?" cried his cousin angrily. "And I don't know what I've done, and it is not fair to expect me to be happy and cheerful when nobody does anything to make me happy."

"You have lost a bracelet," said James, absently, feeling in his pockets. "I picked one up this morning on the landing." And he pulled out Felicia's beloved gold and crystal ring.

She seized it with a little cry of delight. "Oh, how glad I am!" she said. "Thank you, James; how clever of you to find it." And she began fastening it on her slim wrist again.

"How clever of you to let it fall upon the landing," he said. "And now I want to talk to you, Fay," James went on, sitting down beside her on the step. Then he was silent for a little, then he began very nervously: "I have been thinking about a good many things these last few days," he said, "and happiness has been one of the things. Don't you think, dear, we must not care about it too much?"

"Not care!" his cousin said. "How can we not care when we do?" James looked more and more nervous.

"We bow to heaven that ruled it so," he said, hesitating, quoting from a lay preacher. "I saw Dr. — when I was in London, and he told me that matters were more serious with me than I had imagined. I don't know how much more, or what may be in store for us; but, Fay, you and I — our two lives, I mean — belong to something greater than our own happiness, at least one hopes so; for one's own happiness

seems a stupid thing to live for altogether, doesn't it, dear?"

Felicia's circling eyes were fixed upon him. She was twisting her gold bracelet round and round. Jim looked paler and paler as he spoke.

"I think," he said, "our duty in life, Felicia — yours and mine — is not to think whether we are very happy or not, or satisfied" — and the poor fellow's voice ached a little as he spoke — "and, perhaps, the mistake we have both made has been that we have thought a little too much of ourselves and our own feelings, and not enough of something beyond them. . . ."

"Dear, dear James!" said Felicia, and her eyes filled up with tears. James went on steadily, holding her hand in his, —

"And I have been thinking that we have both other things to do just now than marrying and giving in marriage. I must go away and try and get well, to live to do a few of these things; and you must — darling Fay, don't cry — take care of grandmother, and be patient with her, and wait here, and love me a little. And then," resolved to finish what he had to say, he went on hastily, "there is poor Baxter, who wants to come with me; and some day, if he comes back to you, Fay, I think you would be doing wisely to try and make him happy. Perhaps you may not like to think of it just now, but in a little time —" Jim's voice faltered — "One cannot foretell the future —"

"Oh, Jim, what a hateful, hateful creature I am!" burst out Felicia, covering her face with her hands. "You have known it all along; now I understand everything: I have not deserved anything, and you want me to have everything; but I will never — never —"

"Hush, hush!" said Jim, gravely; "take care of grandmother, and don't make any vows, and — and — trust me a little, Felicia," he added, smiling a little sadly himself as he got up to go away.

And so Jim cut the knot that bound him — cut it, and all the difficulties that had beset him of late were vanquished. No one had guessed at the depth of his secret grief, and the pain of the parting — not Aurelius, not Felicia, looking up into his calm face, not Jim himself, who thought himself a foolish, stupid fellow, and no hero; but it was all over now.

It was the last of the late summer days. As he stood, he heard the distant trill of the birds, the drone of buzzing insects: the warm touch of the sun came falling upon them both. A feeling came to Jim as if

he was looking at Fay, with her sweet upturned face, for the last time. It was the real parting, whatever might be. And yet, of the two at that minute, it was not Jim who was most unhappy. The light of his true heart was shining in his eyes. Felicia never forgot his look: a man of gentle will, standing there, that summer's day, with a gift in his hand, priceless, a life's gift, a true heart's love. And Jim, as he left her, felt that he loved her as she ought to be loved. Loved her enough to leave her with a benediction. He was a sick, and dull, and stupid fellow; but he had played his part like an honest man. Felicia was the only woman he ever loved, hers the only hand he ever cared to grasp; but while he held it, he had held it by force, and when he loosened his hold, the fair hand fell away. And he was content that it should be so, and he wisely accepted the very pain as part of his love.

There is something in life which seems to tell us that no failures, no mistakes, no

helplessnesses make failure; no success, no triumphs make success. And so James walked away victorious, leaving the poor vanquished victress alone upon the sunny steps. Was Felicia's wish to be the only one? It was granted, and she did not care for it. She was alone now, but free. She stood watching the young fellow as he walked away. Jim's heart was sad enough, but at rest. Felicia's was beating with passionate gratitude, with anger against herself, with a dim new hope for the future, and, at the same time, with a great new love and regret for the past, for the tie that was now broken for ever. It was a pang that lasted her for all her life.

Later that day, as she was passing through the morning-room, she happened to catch sight of the old Sola plate through the glass of the china cupboard, and with one of her quick impulses, Felicia opened the glass-door, and took it quickly off the shelf, and flung it to the ground, where it lay broken in many pieces at her feet.

**ICEBERGS.**—The iceberg is the largest independent floating body in the universe, except the heavenly orbs. There is nothing approaching it, within the range of our knowledge, on this globe of ours; and yet it is, as we have seen, but a fragment of the ice-stream, which is, in its turn, but an arm of the ice-sea. And yet the iceberg is to the great quantity of Greenland ice as the parting of a finger-nail to the human body; as a small chip to the largest tree; as a shovelful of earth to Manhattan Island. Yet magnify the bit of ice in your tumbler until it becomes, to your imagination, a half a mile in diameter each way, and you have a mass that is far from unusual. Add to this a mile, two miles of length, and you have what may be sometimes seen. I have sailed alongside of an iceberg, two miles and a half, measured with a log-line, before coming to the end of it.

The name signifies, as we have seen before, ice mountain, and it is truly mountainous in size. Lift it out of the water and it becomes a mountain one thousand, two thousand, three thousand feet high. In dimensions it is as if New York city were turned adrift in the Atlantic, or the Central Park were cut out and launched in the same place. An iceberg of the dimensions of the Central Park is far from unusual. And its surface is not in form unlike it either. It is undulating like the Park, and craggy, and crossed by ravines, and dotted with lakes—the water of the lakes being formed from the melting snows of the late winter, and also of the ice itself after the snow have disappeared

before the influence of the summer's sun. I have even bathed in such a lake, although I am glad to say but once, and that was in "those days of other years," when the youthful insanity is strong to say, "I have done it"—a disease which I believe to be amenable only to that treatment popularly known as "sad experience." Skating on an iceberg lake is far more satisfactory and sensible. Such are the general features of the iceberg as they are to be seen every day in the Arctic waters.—*Dr. I. I. Hayes in Appletons' Journal.*

**A NEW FRAGARIA.**—Mr. G. W. Clifton, of Buffalo, U. S. gives (*American Naturalist*, June) an account of a new species of strawberry which has been brought from Jalapa, Mexico, last autumn. It is known in Michigan as the Mexican Ever-bearing Strawberry, and, according to most reliable testimony, it deserves its name. From early June into October—indeed so long as sunlight has strength to ripen berries—it is busy in putting forth fresh flowers and maturing fruit. It is hardy and exceedingly prolific. Its fruit is large, firm, fragrant, sweet, and exquisitely flavoured. It belongs to that section of the genus which bears its achenes, or carpels, superficially on the receptacle, and is distinguished from all its congeners by its dichotomous stem and racemose flowers.

Popular Science Review.

From The Saturday Review.  
THE PURCHASE OF THE TELEGRAPHS.

IF the calculations of the Post Office officials are to be relied on, the bargain with the Electric Telegraph Companies promises to turn out better than could have been expected from the extravagantly liberal character of the terms which the Government were coerced into granting. It is always satisfactory when both parties to a treaty find themselves in pocket by the result. The Companies undoubtedly did so, for the shares of all of them rose in the market, after the Act of last year was passed, something between 50 and 100 per cent. The Marquis of HARTINGTON has now had the satisfaction of informing the public that there will be a profit, though on a more modest scale, for them also out of the transaction. The total purchase-money will approach 7,000,000*l.*, but according to the estimates, which profess to be cautious, and, coming from the able officials of the Post Office, are not likely to be far from the truth, it appears that the net income of the first year will pay 3 1-2 per cent. on the investment, and leave a balance of 77,000*l.* If these figures should be justified by the event, there will be ample grounds for satisfaction. It may be regarded as certain that the profits of the first year will be far short of those which must ultimately be realized, and it will not be unpleasant to taxpayers to contemplate the growth of a new source of revenue which, like that supplied by the Post Office, will be unalloyed by the recollection of the tax-gatherer's visits. But the mere pecuniary results form a comparatively insignificant part of the benefits to be anticipated from this thoroughly statesmanlike undertaking. The transmission of telegraphs, no less than that of letters, is a business which can be best worked as a monopoly. In common with many other large enterprises which concern every member of the public, these undertakings lose more than they gain by the combined stimulus and obstructions of competition. There is infinite waste in setting up duplicate wires and establishing duplicate offices to conduct the communications between the same centres. Competition, moreover, not only caters in wasteful excess for the wants of a few leading towns, but it leaves wholly neglected the requirements of all the rest of the country. If the letter-carrying business were in private hands, London and Liverpool might possibly enjoy facilities almost as great as they possess under a Government monopoly; but the communications with all outlying places would be almost as difficult, costly, and precarious as

if one lived in the middle ages, because it would not answer to serve them efficiently. Precisely the same law holds good, and perhaps even to a greater degree, with respect to telegraphs. It would not pay rival Companies to lay down wires to insignificant villages, but the same department of Government which punctually delivers letters to the smallest hamlet may be trusted to work in the same spirit in the new duties which it is about to assume. Profit will properly be kept in view as a means of relieving the public finances and justifying the absorption of private Companies, but profit will not be, in the case of the telegraphs any more than in that of the Post Office, the sole consideration, as it necessarily is while the business is in the hands of a trading company. It is proposed at once to increase the number of places served by the telegraph from 1,882 to 3,376, with a still larger proportional increase in the number of branch stations. Altogether there will be a telegraph office for every 6,000 instead of for every 13,000 of the population, and these will besides be distributed mainly with regard to the convenience of the public, instead of being selected with a single eye to profit. The enormous value of this boon will probably be appreciated by few until it is seen in a tangible form; but a very moderate amount of reflection will convince any one who considers it that it would be worth purchasing even if it entailed a loss instead of a profit. And the increase of facilities is not the only immediate advantage which will be reaped from the Government monopoly. The cost of a telegram varies now with distance, and is often considerable enough, in spite of the intermittent competition between the Companies, to check very seriously the use of this mode of communication. There are few civilized countries which get so little out of the great invention of telegraphy as Great Britain, and this simply because we have left its development in the hands of private Companies, while elsewhere it has been assumed as a Government duty. The first step of the authorities will go far to remedy this anomaly. A uniform shilling stamp will suffice to frank a telegram of twenty words from any one station to any other, and the simplicity of this system will operate, as it did in the case of the Post Office, almost as much as its economy, in increasing the amount of business done. One drawback there is, that the charge for short distances will be increased by the adoption of a uniform rate. At present you can send a telegram for certain short distances in London for sixpence, and though it is true that these messages travel



less rapidly than a hansom-cab, or even than a messenger on an omnibus, any increase in tariff has rather a retrograde appearance. The importance of these local lines is no doubt small, on account of the extremely inefficient way in which they have been worked; but we shall be greatly surprised and disappointed if, in the course of a year or two, the Post Office does not see its way to the adoption of a sixpenny tariff, not only for short distances, but for the whole country. Even without this the gain to the community, both in money and convenience, will be immense, and it will be secured, so Lord Hartington tells us, not only without any public outlay, but with an absolute profit to the Exchequer.

Estimates are apt to be fallacious in other matters besides the Law Courts, and on general principles it may be thought not unreasonable to accept the official figures with a due amount of incredulity. There is however a large margin for possible error, and it is only fair to say that, so far as can be judged from the brief but lucid statement of the Postmaster-General, these estimates seem to have been prepared on a thoroughly trustworthy basis. In fact, it is very easy to calculate both the receipts and the outgoings of a telegraph business. In other countries large experiments have been made from time to time on the effect of cheapness upon the amount of telegraph *i. e.*, business, and the broad result seems to be, that any considerable reduction recoups itself at once by the increase of traffic. A shilling rate brings in just about as much as a two-shilling rate, and the only difference seems to be in the slight increase of working expenses, due to the larger business done at the lower tariff. All the estimates of the quantity of traffic on which Lord Hartington's calculations were based were derived from the actual experience of other countries, and there is no reason to expect less elasticity here than has been experienced elsewhere. The number and positions of the

stations having been settled, there is little room for error in the estimate of working expenses, and it is quite impossible that the broad results can be materially affected by any small discrepancies which may occur between the actual and the calculated cost either of new works or of the staff to be employed.

In one essential respect the present Government propose to add to the project of their predecessors. They ask Parliament to give to the Executive a monopoly of telegraphs as they now have a monopoly of letter-carrying. To leave in the hands of any ingenious projectors the power of setting up rival lines between the most important towns, for the purpose of compelling the Government to buy them up on terms as favourable as those granted to the old Companies, would be simply to saddle the country with annual payments to a class of schemers who have had their day — and a very long day — and of whom society is heartily tired and a little ashamed. It is only because the work can be done better and more cheaply as a Government monopoly than in any other way that the scheme of buying up the telegraphs was ever justifiable. Once introduce Government action, and competition becomes absurd and mischievous. Instead of being a means of securing cheapness, as it is in all trades to which it is properly applicable, it becomes, in cases analogous to this of the telegraphs, a mere machinery for extorting money from the Government, or, in other words, from the taxpayer. It may be hoped that no prejudice against the term monopoly, odious as it is except when exercised by public officers for the public convenience, will prevent the Legislature from granting an exclusive authority which is absolutely necessary to the success of one of the most beneficial projects of administration which have been introduced since the great reform of the Penny Post.

**SOLAR ACTIVITY.** — During the last few months there have been some remarkable evidences of activity in the solar photosphere. We are approaching the epoch of maximum disturbance, and already the formation of large spots, single or clustering, indicates that we may look, during the actual period of the maximum, for manifestations of activity at least equal to those which have been exhibited on former occasions. At a recent meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society two enormous spots were described and

pictured, one of them by Mr. Bidder, the other by Mr. Browning. The discussion which ensued led to the consideration of the granules whose nature and appearance have been so often dealt with of late years. Mr. Huggins pointed out that it is only in the neighbourhood of the spots that those irregularities of form are to be noticed which have led to the comparison of the granules to willow-leaves, straws, and so on.

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